

Fidelity's Empower LOS Migrates to .NET Technology Platform

BY ANTHONY GARRITANO

JACKSONVILLE, FL—Fidelity is looking to stand out in the eyes of large lenders looking hard at investing in a new loan origination system by migrating its Empower system to a .NET framework.

“As interest rates rise and volume continues to fall, lenders are looking at technology to operate more efficiently and differentiate themselves in a competitive market,” explained Al Bartello, senior vice president of sales and marketing in charge of Empower. “The large lenders are actively looking for an LOS, which is good for us. Prior to that, they were booming during the refinance era. Lenders are also more diligent about the companies and technologies that they’re looking at today.”

“We’ve been in this space for two decades and have completed four technology migrations to newer platforms. It’s unprecedented to have done this successfully four times. So, we have a history and top lenders are actively using our system.”

Fidelity is banking on the flexibility of .Net to be a differentiator. “We have the experience and the flexibility that top lenders need,” said Mr. Bartello. “Also, we’ve had Empower client server out for the past eight years, which put us on the map. We took the mature functionality there and rewrote it in the .NET platform from the ground up. We used Empower client server as our design spec.

“We took a product that was tried and true and migrated it to an advanced technology like .NET and a service-oriented architecture. Lastly, we believe since the

product has been rewritten and re-architected, we feel we’re way ahead of our competitors because our lenders are positioned well to take advantage of new Microsoft products due to be released that will propel our lenders ahead of the competition.”

The design of the .NET Framework is such that it supports platform independence. “Some of the competition has legacy code and that puts us way ahead,” said Mr. Bartello. “You’ll see more and more functionality being used on the Web in terms of accessing multiple business channels, etc. This .NET technology allows lenders a Web Client and a SMART Client for the back office.

“So, the data and functionality are common to both the front end, Web channel and the backend SMART Client app,” he continued. “It’s also built in a service-oriented architecture that enables business users to integrate applications that may be running in other parts of the organization simply and seamlessly.”

In the end, .NET is Microsoft’s answer to a platform-agnostic strategy, one that Fidelity would like to see the mortgage industry embrace in other areas. “All LOS vendors need to move away from anything proprietary. In the past LOS vendors had to build proprietary systems that had proprietary rules or databases because there was no choice,” noted Mr. Bartello.

“However, now it is necessary for any LOS to offer industry standard tools. It will be mandatory that you have a Web offering as well as a SMART Client offering. That line has been drawn in the

sand. In terms of the platform some may have Java, others may have a Microsoft backend.”



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Senior vice president of sales and marketing, said large lenders are "actively looking for an LOS, which is good for us."

On the heels of IBM acquiring Palisades Technology Partners, larger players like Fidelity’s Empower, Fiserv’s UniFi and Gallagher have a new competitor to contend with that carries the clout of the IBM name. “With the Fidelity acquisition of Empower we’ve been very fortunate,” said Mr. Bartello. “In these cases the lender should look at the acquirer, the businesses that they’re in and their integration plans. We’ve been fortunate because Fidelity is exclusively interested in banking services. Fidelity also chose not to operate their business units as separate silos. The mandate here was to integrate everything using XML and Web services so we can go to market with a full solution. In addition, the lender also needs to understand the business strategy of the acquirer.

“This platform enables straight-through or lights-out processing. Lenders can go out and order services and that data is seamlessly fed back to trigger actions in the system.”