

Published by
 B4E Solutions GmbH, Langen/Germany
 Newsletter No 2004/01
 January 2004
 A Publication of **B4E - the Maker of B-oo-levard®**

Happy (?) New Year

Yes, of course! The team of B4E wishes a very happy, healthy, and successful 2004 to all of you. It looks like 2004 is becoming a successful year for the industry: Siemens Mobile reports plus 35 % in revenues for handhels in IV/2003, Nokia's sales are plus 16 % over the year, Sony Ericsson report revenue increase of 16% for IV/2003 along with a turn of the € 69 million loss a year before into a € 43 million profit, Motorola triples its profit from 2002 to 2003 mainly in the last quarter, CISCO is spreading optimism at the Davos World Economic Forum, Deutsche Telekom and France Telecom are reducing debts faster than anticipated; Mr Ollila of Nokia seeing the "commercial breakthrough of UMTS for 2004".

And what about the BSS/OSS market? In 2003 again a couple of young, innovative and promising companies disappeared. The Big Ones laid off substantial amounts of their staff – not only due to loosing big clients; or major parts of their business was sold. Now, for 2004 "when to invest to be just ahead of the recovery curve is the real challenge", says CSG; Amdocs is already investing (into XACCT Technologies); but: concerns of the financial analysts about widespread pricing pressures on billing services are dragging down shares of Amdocs, Convergys, CSG, and others – while in light of the positive news from the telecom market the share prices should grow substantially.

I believe, there is a lot to do in 2004: further streamline billing processes through the use of newer concepts; enable your billing for new services like PTT; prepare the growth of mobile data services ... From my point of view the key issue will continue to be implementing any improvement to billing as efficient as possible – with cost reductions for the short-, medium- and the long-term. So much loved "Financial Engineering" moves real cost only into the future. It hides what really needs to be done: implement a billing system landscape using today's technology in order to cope with your market's demand achieving a much greater efficiency. And typically such technology comes from the young and innovative companies – or ?

All the best to you and your beloved for 2004,
 Thomas Hartstang



12 million subscriber Benchmark with B-oo-levard®

In November 2003, B4E, together with Cap Gemini TMNG, completed a customer paid benchmark of B-oo-levard® at the Sun Microsystems benchmark centre in Germany.

The Customer Requirements:

- (1) Handle an installation with 12 million subscribers within a typical business environment (e.g., tariff plans, discounts) on a Sun Fire 6800 with 96 GB of main memory
- (2) Prove full clientele capability for more 564 independent service /content providers (ISPs)
- (3) Prove 100% transaction safeness
- (4) Update tariffs / products without stop and restart of the application
- (5) Perform reference data updates (EAI-transactions) against the running system without influencing

- the ongoing rating or billing processes
- (6) Demonstrate performance creating service provider bills
 - (7) Demonstrate performance creating event record files for ISPs
 - (8) Demonstrate performance creating various reports

The Benchmark Results:

- (1) With the given hardware 12 million subscribers could be handled processing completely about 6 million event data records per hour
- (2) Clientele processing was proven for all ISPs
- (3) Application and database were "stopped" – no data was lost
- (4) New tariffs were created, affirmed, and correctly processed against special Event Data Records without

- (5) shutting or slowing down the system Subscriber data, pricing schemas and more were changed using EAI transactions without any implication to the rating performance of B-oo-levard®
- (6) Bills for all 564 ISPs were created within 4 minutes while B-oo-levard® was continuing with rating in parallel; about 60 % of EDRs were considered for these bills
- (7) A throughput of 10 million EDRs per hour for the files to be sent to ISPs was achieved while the rating process was running continuously in parallel
- (8) High spender report, daily revenue report, and state authorities inquiry were created within 5 to 8 minutes while the rating process was running continuously in parallel

B-oo-levard® - more than just accomplishing.

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