



Camunda BPM at Helvetia Insurance

- Expanding a central system for customer management through automated processes
- Up to 60,000 process instances per month and 400 users involved

The Background

Over the past 150 years, Helvetia has grown to be a successful and international insurance group employing 6,700 people and serving 4.7 million customers. This Swiss company has its headquarters in St. Gallen and branches in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, France and various other countries ensure its global presence. Its business focuses on private customers, small and medium sized enterprises and larger companies. Helvetia's services include life and non-life insurance, tailored specialty line insurance coverage and reinsurance.

Since 2013, Helvetia has been using Camunda BPM as an Embedded Engine in more than six Java EE applications productively and with an increasing tendency. The interview was carried out with Daniel Zigerlig (Software Engineer) and Andreas Eigenmann (Enterprise Architect), Helvetia.

The Challenge

“Previously, no BPM system was being deployed in the Java environment, until mid-2012, when a new project raised new challenges: within the context of digitalisation, a central system for customer management had to be opened up to further channels. For instance, extended, automated and manual review processes had to be implemented for changes made to personal data. We also required specific information and processes that were dependent on how certain data was changed. In order to manage the processes during different types of events, a wide range of technical rules are required. We wanted to build a new central application that would store all assignment processes. These processes would review information and communicate with mailboxes according to the organizational structures in place. The department also required detailed reports on the processes and their tasks, for instance on throughput times.”

Why Camunda BPM ?

“During the evaluation, the following aspects were of importance:

- A good and easy integration into Java EE and our JBoss application server where possible
- Support of BPMN 2.0 as the primary notation
- Lightweight
- Simple deployment for Java developers
- Multi-client capability
- Easy interaction with a GUI application of our own
- Transaction management with two-phase commit
- Good support

Evaluations were carried out for Red Hat JBoss BPM, Activiti and Camunda. Following a first analysis, we decided to carry out a proof of concept workshop with Camunda, during which different case studies would be implemented.

Camunda provided instructions for this in the form of patterns.

The solution provided by Camunda which was developed during the proof of concept was convincing and all requirements were met in an optimal way. This was due both directly to the engine and its components as well as to the flexibility and expandability when deployed in an existing Java environment.”

The Implementation

“Within half a year, two developers were able to implement the part of the project that deals with the process implementation, integration, mailbox application and its mask. Due to their prior knowledge of Java, our developers were quickly able to get to grips with Camunda BPM and there was no need for them to be extensively trained in this area. At the beginning of the project, Camunda was available on-site to support us effectively on getting to know BPMN modelling and acquiring best practices.”

The Impact

“We were able to implement the project successfully within our time frame. The BPMN modelling was carried out by our developers at the technical level. However, communication between the developers and the department was greatly facilitated by an accompanying, comprehensive BPMN model. Now we are able to more quickly generate a joint understanding and discuss technical requirements.

For the wide range of technical rules, an existing Rule Engine could easily be integrated. Camunda BPM provides us with a lightweight BPMN 2.0 platform which we were able to perfectly integrate into our existing Java EE platform and architecture. We are also able to implement individual requirements with the programming model which we have become accustomed to. This provides us with the necessary flexibility towards our department. Furthermore, company-specific, technical and security-relevant requirements could be implemented quickly.

Camunda ensured experienced support ranging from the analysis of our specific needs to the implementation of our first project. When it came to support, their reaction speed was very swift and their good solutions were convincing.

Since the implementation of our first project, the Camunda BPM software has continued to develop rapidly and we have already been able to make use of new features. Camunda Cockpit provides very comfortable support for the oversight of our processes. And it is also perfectly possible to integrate the Camunda Core Engine into our HTML5 applications.

Today, up to 60,000 process instances per month are launched in our projects. More than 400 users are working on the processes via various inboxes.”

Learn more

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