



## Sogang Language Program Builds Integrated Channel Management System

Sogang Language Program (SLP) is a language school managed by Sogang University, one of South Korea's top four universities. Since its inception in 1994, SLP has grown rapidly—it now has over 40 franchises and is still growing—and become one of the top private language institutes for children in the country.

Increasing demand for English education in Korea has created fierce competition within the language school industry.

Therefore, brand power, acquisition of a loyal customer base, and efficient management of franchised language schools are key elements to success. For SLP, gaining a competitive advantage involved a few fundamental principles:

- Offer a quality education.
- Understand students' wants and needs and satisfy them.
- Provide an overall superb quality of service.
- Do all of this efficiently and therefore profitably.

The challenge for SLP was increasing its competitive edge while also managing a network of more than 40 franchises. Changes had to occur across the entire SLP organization—from headquarters to franchise channels and teachers and staff to students and alumni, online and offline.

### Streamlining Management Systems

To reduce redundant communications and handle mission-critical tasks between headquarters and channels (franchise schools), SLP decided to automate the value-chain activities with channels,

**Customer:**

Sogang Language Program

**Industry:**

Education

**Challenges:**

- Managing over 40 independently owned franchises
- Integrating online and offline demand channels
- Providing centralized Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- Delivering a centrally managed but locally operated language school resource management system
- Reducing redundant communication and increasing efficiency

**Solution:**

- Interstage Application Server

**Benefits:**

- Integration with a wide range of different systems and servers
- High reliability and availability
- Fast online transactions
- Extensibility to future needs
- Solid support and service



migrating them to an integrated franchise relationship management system with three functions: language school resource management, franchise management, and customer management. Lee Yong Woo, Sogang's chief operating officer, described what SLP hoped to accomplish: "It doesn't make sense to manage over 40 franchises manually. Our goal in undertaking this system integration project was to reduce the cost of managing existing channels and educating new channels while increasing efficiency and productivity."

The challenge was not only to manage existing and new channels, but to integrate a complete language resource management system, including course management, student profiles, registration, scheduling, sales management, and human resources for each franchise channel into the school's infrastructure. In addition, SLP envisioned a centralized Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. "Although we've been growing at an unparalleled speed, and customers have increased dramatically, we haven't been too successful in unifying channels," said Lee Jung Gu, SLP's director of Franchise Management and head of the IT department. "Because channels are independently owned third parties, it has been difficult to manage them centrally. The result was segmented marketing efforts that weren't cohesive, and we weren't able to reach our customers from headquarters."

Building such a centralized system, however, required the three different back office systems to be seamlessly integrated with the SLP website. This would allow online customer data to be synchronized with the meta-database, which holds all the customer data from the more than 40 franchise channels—tens of thousands of records. The aim was to have both the relative performance of each channel and the customer information generated by the channels at headquarters' fingertips.

### **Interstage Forges the Link**

SLP chose Fujitsu's Interstage Application Server to integrate their systems. SynerNet Inc., a leading channel management provider in Korea, makes the partner relationship management solution that SLP chose for its franchise management system. SynerNet had experience with the Interstage Application Server and knew it had ability to link smoothly with mission-critical systems. The superiority of the Interstage Application Server performance figures in comparison to other Web application servers was also persuasive.



According to Um Jin Sub, SynerNet's senior executive manager of technology, Interstage had many other advantages, "On top of the complex integration tasks that this project required, expandability was a key point for this system. We knew that the Interstage Application Server could connect easily to the various servers of SLP's many agents, and we were comfortable in the knowledge that it could handle any future system expansion. Furthermore, we knew we could receive reliable support and service, because Fujitsu is an experienced and well established vendor throughout the world."

SLP is the first language school in Korea to take the initiative to automate and integrate its back office systems with front office Web applications. With the help of Fujitsu's Interstage Application Server, it was able to gain a competitive edge in its rapidly growing market sector. Interstage enabled not only flexible system integration, but also empowered the speed of mission-critical operations through increased overall system performance.