

# A COMPLETE CUSTOMER VIEW WITH ATTUNITY

## Customer Case Study



### At a Glance

#### Company

Valassis offers a wide range of marketing services to consumer-packaged goods manufacturers, retailers, technology companies and other customers.

#### Objective

Increase customer satisfaction and the performance of marketing campaigns by seamlessly integrating data from multiple sources to improve reporting and analysis.

#### Solution

Valassis has timely access to key operational data to better serve its customers. Specifically: EII with Attunity Federate joins data from SQL Server, RMS and Oracle Rdb systems to give Valassis an up-to-date, integrated view of their business data.

#### Benefits

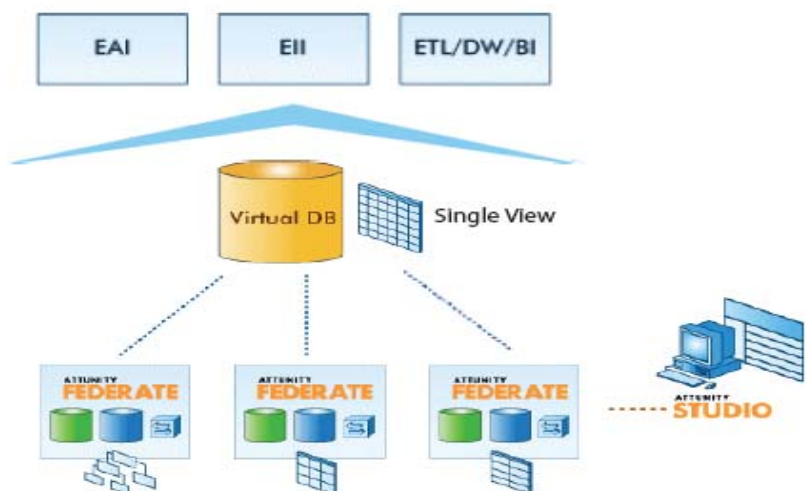
- More successful marketing campaigns lead to increased customer retention
- Federate access to disparate data sources increases efficiency of reporting and analysis
- Fast, easy implementation
- High reliability and performance

## EII with Attunity Improves Reporting, Customer Satisfaction of Valassis

Attunity enables Valassis to access critical data, improving the quality of its marketing data and increasing customer satisfaction.

When marketers want to see their consumer response jump, they partner with Valassis. Valassis has the full marketing cycle covered - from planning to execution and evaluation. Valassis is the leading producer of newspaper inserts as well for other marketing services (such as sampling, direct mail, coupon clearing and analytics) that deliver top results. "We offer marketing solutions based on unique business logic to help our clients get maximum exposure for their programs," says Mark Peterson, DBA at Valassis. "It's phenomenal how much business logic goes into placing coupons in Sunday papers."

At Valassis, the main repositories for data and business logic are RMS on OpenVMS systems and Oracle Rdb; with many of the original applications being written as far back as 1986. More recently, Valassis added Microsoft SQL Server to the mix. So their configuration now also requires significant data exchange between the legacy data sources and the new systems. The challenge of running reports and queries in this environment was becoming more and more difficult. Valassis needed distributed, heterogeneous access to the data while leaving it in place.



These reports and queries are the heart of the services and value that Valassis provides. By analyzing past promotions, the marketing group can determine success rates...and the causes for any unexpected results. The teams also rely on the reports to stay up-to-date on upcoming projects that might need their attention. The more comprehensive the reports are, the better the outcome of future promotions. The better the results, the more satisfied their customers will be. Therefore, better reporting translates directly into better program results and higher customer retention.

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**Mark Peterson**  
**Valassis**

## CONTACT ATTUNITY

### North America

T: +1 781 213 5200  
1-800-638-2258  
[sales@attunity.com](mailto:sales@attunity.com)

### Europe, Middle East & Africa

T: +44(0) 1344 742 805  
[info-uk@attunity.com](mailto:info-uk@attunity.com)

### Asia Pacific

T: + (852) 2756 9233  
[info-hk@attunity.com](mailto:info-hk@attunity.com)

## Immediate Data Access

Peterson deals with database issues and recommends ways to control access to data. Therefore, he was instrumental in the process of selecting an integration solution. He and the IT team looked at a number of different products and methodologies. What differentiated Attunity? According to Peterson, "The product was installed and it ran".

"When we set it up for testing, it only took about fifteen minutes to get up and going," Peterson continues, "There were no significant or difficult configuration processes. Within half an hour, we were querying through Attunity Federate. That was very impressive." The Attunity test configuration achieved better-than-expected performance straight out of the box. And quick phone calls to Attunity allowed Peterson to further optimize the system to get even better results.

## Federate Data Access for Enterprise Information Integration

Valassis has put Attunity Federate to heavy use making data from RMS and Oracle Rdb systems available to SQL Server. Once the data is federated in SQL Server, the group runs reports and inquires that enable Valassis to provide its service to its customers. In certain cases, Attunity Integrated Suite also updates the VMS systems from SQL Server.

Peterson recalls that during the selection process, "We threw our worst at Attunity and it just wouldn't break. In particular, we needed to join data from RMS, Rdb and SQL Server in a single query. Attunity handles six, seven and eight-way table joins without a hitch."

## The Right Specialized Capabilities

Technically, Attunity offers the IT team many capabilities that make it easier for them to get their projects done. For example, the solution can join SQL Server with RMS and RDB without intermediate steps. It can also call a stored procedure to manipulate data on the VMS systems and can join the output of a SQL Server stored procedure to another data source. Attunity also provides error messages with more meaningful data to help with troubleshooting and optimization.

With this solution, there is what Peterson calls: "One version of the truth for RMS files. Attunity maintains a single VMS-based central repository of RMS definitions. It also accesses RDB and SQL Server metadata directly. It has a nice outbound VMS capability, which we use when it's more effective to start on our VMS systems and push data to SQL Server."

*Valassis has been listed as one of Fortune magazine's "Best Companies to Work For" for seven consecutive years. Fortune noted that the company opens up possibilities for employees by encouraging them to share suggestions, providing stock options and offering an extensive array of benefits. Peterson sees a parallel, saying "Attunity is opening up new possibilities for our development staff. It gives us the freedom to consider the best way to turn data into information."*