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Background

CABC Limited supplies and supports customer and contact management systems. The company was founded in 1993 and is headquartered in Newbury, Berkshire, England. They are an authorized Platinum Plus supplier of Maximizer Enterprise CRM and in 2004 became the first company in the U.K. to become a certified supplier of the Microsoft CRM system. The company has boasted an over 65 percent growth rate and has expanded its services to include system integration, consulting and technical training and support. Over the years, CABC has become known for its CRM consultants and they have earned a reputation for quality integration work. Their skilled development team uses Microsoft Visual Basic to create and maintain both their own software products and the customizations they do for their clients.

Industry: Reseller and support provider for customer and contact management systems

Application: Wireless application for Palm products to enable remote sales forces to access customer and product information

" ... the use of AppForge changed what looked like a potentially very expensive and risky development into a reasonable sized project that I could propose with confidence."

Ian Wallace
CABC

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Challenge

One of CABC's largest clients wanted something that their sales representatives could take with them into customer sites to report on their meetings in real time. The solution had to be quick and easy to access remotely. Their field sales staff already had laptops, but wanted to take advantage of hand-held devices. The client asked if CABC could help develop that solution. Also, many of the reps already had Palm computers. While CABC had deep development experience, their team had no particular Palm development skills. They needed a solution that they could develop in Visual Basic, a language they were already familiar with, that could be applied to a Palm environment. The solution need to require a minimal learning curve and could be synchronized to multiple devices, quickly and cost effectively. CABC found out about AppForge when looking at the Palm Software Development Kit (SDK). After downloading a trial of the software, they realized the product was a fit for their needs.

Solution

AppForge stood out as an immediately more attractive option than a native programming develop tool. CABC perceived the product as having three distinct advantages. First, by being able to use Visual Basic, the programmers could work in a familiar language. Second, by using a platform technology, it was ensured that the development risk is reduced and the implementation of the application synchronization is simplified. Last, support for the entire Palm product line was a major advantage and a great and unexpected benefit that CABC could offer their clients.

Outcome

"In short the use of AppForge changed what looked like a potentially very expensive and risky development into a reasonable sized project that I could propose with confidence," said Ian Wallace, CABC. The original application was for only Visit Reporting. That use has been expanded to include a customer satisfaction survey. Both applications have been

integrated into the Maximizer Enterprise CRM so the information can be either entered directly into the CRM or through the hand held device. There is also a possibility that the CABC team will deploy the applications to Pocket Windows devices and their use of the AppForge toolkit means that this will not involve a complete redevelopment of the application. The company now feels very confident about its ability to deploy solutions that integrate to their CRM applications with custom handheld applications. "Our experience of using the tool means we can now offer this kind of solution to other clients," said Wallace. "Handheld devices are very popular and I hope it won't be too long before we have another requirement!

For more information

For more information about CABC Limited and its products, visit their website at <http://www.cabc.co.uk/>.