



IT Firm Uses Software-plus-Services Approach, Saves Customer \$1.2 Million

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Professional services

Customer Profile

New York, New York-based Infusion Development specializes in the architecture and implementation of enterprise-scale financial systems and mission-critical solutions for a wide range of industries.

Business Situation

As an early adopter of emerging technologies, Infusion wanted to create a solution using the software-plus-services strategy—integrating Web-based components with existing on-premises applications.

Solution

Infusion built an online “journey management product” for Travelport using Microsoft® Virtual Earth™ and Windows Live™ technologies, which were integrated onsite with Office Outlook® and Windows Mobile®.

Benefits

- Hastened speed to market by at least one year
- Reduced development costs by U.S.\$670,000
- Reduced customer equipment costs by \$480,000
- Reduced total cost of ownership
- Enhanced competitive advantage

“With software-plus-services, we help our customers reduce costs—both in initial development and in total cost of ownership—by integrating the latest in online and on-premises Microsoft technologies.”

Tyler Davey, General Manager, Infusion Development

As leaders in the field of emerging technology, Infusion Development uses the latest Microsoft® innovations to devise comprehensive solutions for its customers. It is particularly excited about the flexibility and power of choice that the software-plus-services strategy can provide. By integrating online and on-premises technologies, Infusion Development creates solutions to help customers bring their products to market more quickly, reduce costs, and gain a competitive advantage. For example, Infusion Development built a next-generation travel-booking solution for Travelport by incorporating Microsoft Virtual Earth™ and Windows Live™ technologies with Office Outlook® and Windows Mobile®. Using the software-plus-services approach, Infusion Development shaved 8 to 12 months off of the development process and saved Travelport at least U.S.\$1.2 million in development and equipment costs.

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Tyler Davey, General Manager,
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Situation

Founded in 1998, Infusion Development has steadily grown from its original New York, New York–based headquarters to a company with offices in the United States, Canada, England, and the United Arab Emirates. A Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner, Infusion Development specializes in building mission-critical solutions for some of the world’s largest banks and government agencies, as well as customers from a range of other industries.

“We’re the company to turn to when you need a solution that absolutely cannot fail,” says Tyler Davey, General Manager of Infusion Development. “We work with passion and dedication, building innovative solutions and helping our customers get those offerings to market regardless of the challenges.”

Infusion Development has also built a reputation as an industry expert on emerging technologies. “Since the beginning, we’ve been an early adopter of what we call incubation technologies,” says Kayla Spiess, Marketing Manager for Infusion Development. “We incorporate the newest Microsoft offerings into the solutions that we develop, including adoption-based technologies that other IT consultancies simply don’t know as well as we do. Our customers gain a significant advantage over their competition by being among the first to offer solutions based on the latest technologies.”

As a consulting firm, Infusion Development also advises companies about the best ways to use emerging technologies to speed time-to-market and reduce costs. “We’re constantly looking for ways to help our customers get their solutions to market faster and target new market areas, while also reducing their IT expense,” Davey says.

“These types of efficiencies are especially important in today’s economic climate.”

One such customer was Travelport, a leader in the travel distribution industry. Through its global distribution system (GDS), Travelport processes up to 1.1 billion travel transactions each day and connects more than 63,000 travel agencies to 83,000 hotel properties, 28,000 rental car locations, 7,500 tourist attractions, and 450 airlines throughout the world.

After 38 years of using traditional GDS technology—and in order to gain a competitive advantage over its competition—Travelport decided to develop a next-generation user booking system. “We wanted to offer our travel partners a solution that draws from the latest in technology to support the travel needs of small- to medium-sized companies,” says Beckie Watson, Vice President of Travelport. “We knew we wanted to incorporate mapping, as well as Web-based services and software products. The recommendation from our Microsoft account manager was, ‘You need to work with the experts at Infusion Development.’”

Solution

Travelport wanted to offer its travel partners an innovative “journey management product” that would provide users with a range of imagery, mapping, and collaboration capabilities. Travelport also wanted the flexibility to deploy the offering to its customers as either a hosted or installed product. Infusion Development recommended a robust, easy-to-use solution based on the software-plus-services approach—which meant that the solution would combine the best of online and on-premises applications.

Infusion Development selected the Microsoft Virtual Earth™ online mapping

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platform, the Windows Live™ network of Internet services, and the Microsoft Silverlight™ browser plug-in as the Web-based components of the solution. These technologies are hosted “in the cloud” (in Microsoft data centers) and are accessed through Web services, which significantly reduces the data storage footprint at Travelport. “Without cloud-based technologies as part of this solution, Travelport would have required a dedicated warehouse capable of storing over 14 petabytes of data just to handle the mapping portion of the application,” Tyler explains.

Infusion Development also created add-ins for the Microsoft Office Outlook® messaging and collaboration client, Windows Mobile® software, and the Windows Vista® operating system—all of which reside onsite with the user. To insure seamless integration with the Travelport data center in Atlanta, Georgia (which houses more than 3,900 server computers and manages 424 terabytes of data), Infusion Development used the Microsoft SQL Server® 2005 Enterprise data management software to round out the solution.

Developers completed a prototype in April 2008, and six months later Travelport launched an internal pilot of its alpha release. Travelport plans to complete an external pilot program with partner companies and have a commercially available release ready by July 2009.

With the Travelport solution, users will be able to coordinate all of their travel plans within an online journey management portal (Figure 1). “With the Travelport solution, my travel companions can see everything that I want to do during our trip, and we can plan the experience together,” Davey says. “We can use Virtual Earth to

map out the different locations, restaurants, points of interests, and hotels near our destination. My companions can see everything that I’ve scheduled, and—with the touch of a button—can instantly reserve the same itinerary. We can even send instant messages to each other through Windows Live Messenger.” Using the Office Outlook add-in, users can send journey invitations to everyone on their invite lists, and those invitations automatically synchronize with each traveler’s Outlook calendar. And with the Windows Mobile client, users have access to the journey management solution even when they’re on the road.

“This is the type of solution that we’re passionate about bringing to the marketplace,” says Davey. “With the software-plus-services approach, Travelport has the flexibility to deploy the offering to its travel partners as a hosted solution integrated with existing on-premises applications, or installed on-premises with hosted components. It really is the best of both worlds. We’re proud to say that we helped Travelport develop one of the most innovative travel solutions on the market, powered by the best of emerging Microsoft technologies.”

Benefits

By integrating the best in pre-built, hosted solution components, emerging technologies, and existing on-premises applications, Infusion Development creates solutions to help customers bring products to market more quickly, reduce development costs and total cost of ownership, and gain a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Faster Speed to Market

Infusion Development is excited about the tremendous time savings inherent in the software-plus-services strategy. “We were

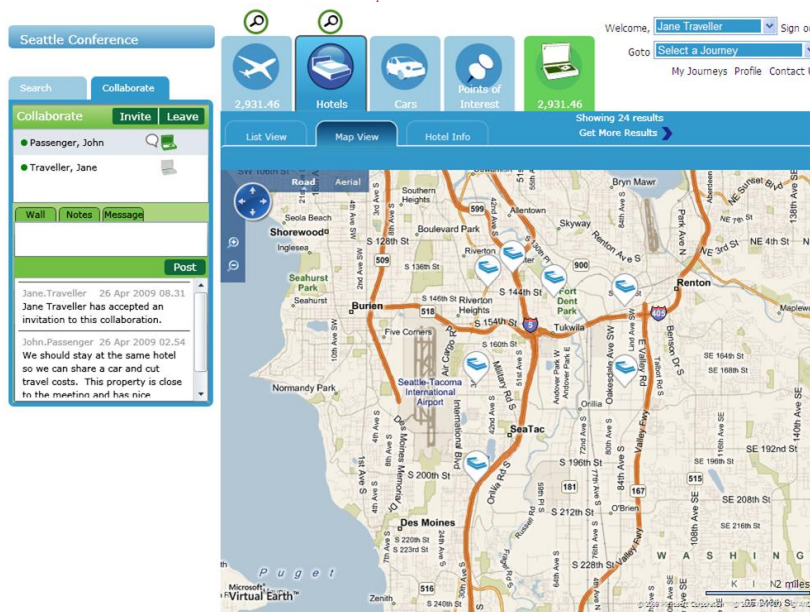


Figure 1: Infusion developed a journey management portal that integrated Microsoft Virtual Earth, Windows Live, Microsoft Silverlight, Office Outlook, Windows Mobile, Windows Vista, and SQL Server 2005 Enterprise.

“We use the latest in Microsoft technology to help our customers reduce costs, get their solutions out the door quickly, and demonstrate real innovation.”

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able to significantly accelerate our development process because we used existing Web-based Microsoft products such as Windows Live ID, Live Contacts, Live Messenger, and Virtual Earth, plus onsite applications such as Office Outlook,” says Davey. “It probably would have taken us at least 8 to 12 months longer to construct the kind of functionality we get from Virtual Earth alone. With the software-plus-services approach, we don’t have to reinvent the wheel—Microsoft has already done the majority of the work for us.”

Also, because Infusion Development used the software-plus-services strategy to develop this solution, Travelport can deploy the offering to its travel partners as a hosted, on-premises, or hybrid solution. Travelport anticipates that this freedom of choice will dramatically shorten the sales cycle. “Travelport can say to prospective customers, ‘Don’t spend \$100,000 or \$1 million to install a product onsite—let us manage it for you for a fee,’” Davey explains. “It’s a win-win situation—strong

revenue growth for Travelport and affordable deployment options for its customers.”

Additionally, Infusion Development benefits from the flexibility of the software-plus-services approach. The company can quickly redesign the solution to match the branding requirements of any corporation, significantly reducing the amount of time needed to customize the solution for a new customer. “We can redesign and set up the solution very quickly—typically within four to six weeks,” Davey explains. “This wouldn’t be possible without software-plus-services.”

Reduces Development and Equipment Costs

Reducing development time also has a financial benefit. “Without software-plus-services, a company would have to invest in multiple developers working 8 to 12 months longer than it took us to develop the Travelport solution,” Davey says. This could potentially cost upwards of U.S.\$670,000 in additional development costs.

“With software-plus-services, we help our customers reduce costs—both in the initial development phase and in total cost of ownership—by integrating the latest in online and onsite Microsoft technologies,” Davey adds. “A company would need to invest in at least 120 servers to build out this total solution without using Microsoft software such as Virtual Earth and Windows Live. With software-plus-services, we can run the solution on two servers—one front-end Web server and one back-end data server—saving approximately \$480,000 in equipment costs alone, not including bandwidth, IT resources, et cetera.”

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

www.microsoft.com

For more information about Infusion Development products and services, call (212) 732-6100 or visit the Web site at: www.infusion.com

For more information about Travelport products and services, call (973) 939-1000 or visit the Web site at: www.travelport.com

Boosts Competitive Advantage

Infusion Development uses emerging technology—especially the software-plus-services approach—to gain a competitive edge in the marketplace. “We use the latest in Microsoft technology to help our customers reduce costs, get their solutions out the door quickly, and demonstrate real innovation,” Davey says. “When our customers launch their software-plus-services solutions, their competition is thinking, ‘Wow—this solution is way ahead of anything that we can offer. We have so much work to do to catch up.’ Being technology pioneers gives us—and our customers—a market edge over and above everyone else.”

Software + Services

Software-plus-services is an industry shift driven by the fast-growing recognition that combining Internet services with client and server software can deliver exciting new opportunities. Microsoft is dedicated to helping individuals and businesses take advantage of these opportunities. By bringing together the best of both software and services, we maximize capabilities, choice, and flexibility for our customers. The broad software-plus-services approach unites multiple industry phenomena including software as a service, service-oriented development, and the Web 2.0 user experience under a common umbrella.

For more information about software-plus-services, go to: www.microsoft.com/softwareplusservices

Software and Services

- Microsoft Office
 - Microsoft Office Outlook 2003
 - Microsoft Office Outlook 2007
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2005 Enterprise
- Windows Mobile 5
- Windows Mobile 6
- Microsoft Virtual Earth 6.0
- Windows Live
 - Windows Live Contact
 - Windows Live ID
 - Windows Live Messenger
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 - Web services
 - Software-plus-services