



BOARD CONNECTS CUSTOMERS TO THE CLOUD WITH PROGRESS



Challenge

BOARD International develops and sells BOARD, a software application organizations around the world used for Business Intelligence (BI) and Corporate Performance Management (CPM). Headquartered in Switzerland and with branches in 15 countries, the company is a global player in the BI/CPM space, competing with such large competitors as SAP and IBM. BOARD has been adopted by more than 3,000 organizations worldwide, and the company has seen double-digit growth annually for the past eight years.

According to Pietro Ferrari, Chief Technology Officer, BOARD's team is lean and mean, and relies on strong technology partnerships to stay competitive. "We're continuously improving our technology through our alliance with Progress, to bring our capabilities to the market now and into the future," he said.

What sets the company's software apart is its broad range of capabilities. "BOARD is applicable across industries, and it enables customers to combine functionality typically met with multiple tools," said Ferrari. "For example, SAP customers would need three tools to accomplish what they can with BOARD."

CLIENT



But to remain competitive with the larger players, a cloud offering was essential. “We had to provide customers with the choice to use our on-premise solution or access it in the cloud,” said Ferrari. “It’s a must-have for survival in the market.”

A key enabler was data connectivity. “It was our first concern—how do we move data from on-premise to the cloud?” said Ferrari. “We already had some experience with Progress® DataDirect® ODBC connectors, so when we found out Progress also offered cloud connectors, that’s where we started.”

Ferrari downloaded a trial version of the Progress DataDirect Cloud® connectivity driver. “We didn’t find any other solution that took the same approach as Progress,” said Ferrari. A cloud offering in itself, Progress provides a web portal where you can configure everything, rather than installing the connectivity driver on your own server. “Progress does all the maintenance and updates transparently, so we don’t have to,” he said. “We didn’t find anything else similar on the market.”

Solution

Implementing the DataDirect Cloud solution took roughly three months from the initial trial download, enabling BOARD to launch its cloud product within the year. Testing went smoothly and quickly. “Progress DataDirect was essential for positioning our solution in the cloud,” said Ferrari. “Not resolving the connectivity issue would have been a show stopper.”

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Chief Technology Officer, BOARD International

Additionally, Progress DataDirect opened up an OEM opportunity for BOARD. According to Ferrari, customers start using BOARD and realize they need real-time access, so they evolve from on-premise installations to the cloud. “We discovered we could OEM the DataDirect drivers to our customers, for an additional revenue opportunity,” he said. “Progress DataDirect enables you to get through the firewall without connecting to a VPN, enabling our OEM business.”

BOARD’s first customer to leverage the connector was a fashion retailer in Belgium, with more than 125 shops in Belgium and Luxembourg. The company is using DataDirect to connect its SQL data warehouse to the BOARD solution in the cloud. “The company has an aggressive strategy to move everything to the cloud, and will likely need to purchase additional connectors,” said Ferrari.

To date, six BOARD customers are leveraging the DataDirect connector, but Ferrari expects 75-80 percent of BOARD’s customers to purchase them over the next couple of years.

Results

Ferrari said by choosing Progress DataDirect Cloud, he made the right choice for today and for the future. “We needed a solution that would work immediately, and it did,” he said. “We didn’t even know if it was possible in the first place, and it saved us from having to dedicate our own developers to building an in-house solution, which could have taken months. Instead, we just downloaded DataDirect from the web, and it was done.”

Ferrari credits this choice to the ease and speed by which BOARD can help its customers execute their own cloud strategies. “Installing the DataDirect Cloud connector is a smooth, straightforward process, and we can have a new customer up and running in the cloud in just 10 minutes,” he said. “Progress DataDirect Cloud gives us the flexibility to meet whatever configuration needs our customers have.”

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Most importantly, DataDirect Cloud has had a big impact in meeting BOARD’s own objectives and goals around cloud availability. “When we presented our cloud strategy to partners, most of the questions were around data connectivity; because we’re in the BI space, we deal with large amounts of data per transaction, and everyone is concerned about data performance and security,” he said. “Progress DataDirect Cloud alleviated those concerns and made our move to the cloud possible.”

ABOUT BOARD INTERNATIONAL

BOARD International has enabled more than 3,000 companies worldwide to rapidly deploy Business Intelligence and Corporate Performance Management applications on a single integrated and programming-free platform, in a fraction of the time or cost required by traditional BI or CPM solutions. The BOARD platform provides a single, accurate and complete view of an organization’s information, fully integrated with enterprise processes, while uniquely planning and monitoring performance from strategic down to operational detail. BOARD has a worldwide direct sales force and a reseller network with local partners across the globe.

The most recent release of the BOARD platform, BOARD 10, allows organizations to harness the full power of an all-in-one decision management environment either on-premise, in the cloud, or in hybrid mode, combining unified BI, Analytics and CPM with the architectural robustness and security of the Amazon Web Services platform or Microsoft Azure. BOARD 10 also introduces the “Data Fast Track,” a new self-service data modeling component that allows business users to easily connect to any data source, instantly create data models and immediately run visual analyses or build analytical applications on their own PCs.

Learn More



Ebook: Untold Story of Data: Powering the World’s Data



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PROGRESS

Progress (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or in the cloud, on any platform or device, to any data source, with enhanced performance, minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

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