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FIVE PATHS TO HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY WITH PAAS

INTRODUCTION

That lunchtime chat with a lukewarm prospect turned into a lengthy conversation after the conference, and now you've got a hot project. As you head back to the office, you start to map out the project plan. Can you meet all of your new client's requirements in time?

This common dilemma isn't just your problem. It is your client's problem, too. As the workplace is more information-intensive, business interactivity is driven by software. Lately software has been all about apps—at least for consumers—and they work well.

Consumer apps have become so popular that mobile device users rely on them when making most buying decisions, and why shouldn't they? Apps can point you to the nearest location of your favorite coffee shop, send bios of new meeting contacts and deliver bonus air mile coupons—quickly and easily.

Ask yourself, "Can business apps work as well as consumer apps?" If they can, would they improve the workplace in the same way consumer apps have improved leisure time?

PAAS MAKES IT SIMPLE

Imagine productivity savings multiplied hundreds of thousands of times across critical enterprise applications, and you'll understand why closing the gap between Business and IT becomes more crucial every single day. As employees struggle to make smart and agile decisions, they need access to accurate, real-time data that is simple to use and understand.

Mobile apps, social media and the web have changed the way people interact with information and each other. When it comes to enterprise software, business users expect the same functionality and easy-to-use interface available in consumer apps. But IT departments struggle to keep up with the intense demand.

MOST BUSINESS APPLICATIONS SIMPLY DON'T MEET USER EXPECTATIONS.

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The majority of business applications simply don't meet the expectations of today's users. IT resources are stretched too thin, the costs of re-architecting software development infrastructure and teams are high, and timeframes simply too long to accomplish better usability and user interface goals. Organizations are turning to cloud-based development platforms to try to close these app gaps so that they can enable business users to access and use critical data to make business decisions, empower customers and grow competitive advantage.

PAAS PERFORMANCE PATHS

When choosing a Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) solution, companies should look for specific elements to speed development, testing, user experience (UX), production and deployment. A high-productivity PaaS provides five paths to faster, simpler application development so companies can seize new opportunities in digital business—and enable the next generation of workers.

1. INCREASE DEVELOPER PRODUCTIVITY

A high-productivity PaaS provides a more efficient way to build applications using a model–driven approach. Such a PaaS relies primarily on an easy-to-use graphical user interface (GUI). Built for the next generation of workers raised on the web, a user-friendly GUI speeds the time to develop new applications.

> ## AN EASY-TO-USE GUI SPEEDS THE TIME TO DEVELOP NEW APPS.

Rather than coding every aspect of an application, developers can quickly drag-and-drop needed elements, then click to modify them. Such ease-of-use helps developers quickly prototype new applications and take on more projects in a given time and focus on strategic initiatives. This boost in speed puts companies in a better position to innovate and respond to new business opportunities.

2. ENABLE SELF-SERVICE SO BUSINESS USERS CAN BECOME CITIZEN DEVELOPERS

A high-productivity PaaS make it practical for people in line-of-business (LOB) capacities—or "citizen developers"—to build powerful applications on their own. Such self-service capability is not only increasingly important in today's highly dynamic business world, but is actually expected by over 70% of next generation millennial workers.[1] Equipping business users in this way also allows companies to leverage their existing talent and thought leadership for competitive differentiation.

> ## SELF-SERVICE CAPABILITY IS NOT ONLY INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT IN TODAY'S HIGHLY DYNAMIC BUSINESS WORLD, BUT IS ACTUALLY EXPECTED BY OVER 70% OF NEXT GENERATION MILLENNIAL WORKERS.

[1] *The Next Generation Worker: The Citizen Developer, TrackVia, 2014.*

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3. SUPPORT SIMPLE SCALE-OUT AS LOADS SHIFT

Shifting development to a high-productivity PaaS lets companies leverage inherent cloud capabilities. The ability to scale is a powerful capability as application development workloads shift over time.

Capacity and resources may often need to be added quickly, sometimes with little warning. With a high-productivity PaaS, scale-out is fast and easy, from increasing the number of production servers to expanding the size of a critical database for performance testing. Similarly, scaling down can be just as easy.

4. DIFFERENTIATE WITH DATA

New applications typically need access to multiple data sources in real time. Retail apps commonly pull data from customer relationship management (CRM) and enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems, inventory databases and social networks. Similarly, in financial services, new applications must access account databases, portfolio inventories and third-party data.

With a high-productivity PaaS, IT does not have to invest time manually providing access to myriad data sources. Given the accelerated rate of new application development in most companies, this can represent a significant time savings.

This means developers do not have to spend time writing complicated code for each data source for every application. They can dedicate more time ensuring business logic is robust and applications themselves are efficient and run well. Instead of focusing on the complex nuances of data connectors and extractors, they can concentrate on customer requirements and continuous innovation.

5. CREATE MULTI-PLATFORM MOBILE APPS

Whether you have to support a mobile workforce or create mobile applications for customers and partners, the need to support Apple and Android devices is critical. A high-productivity PaaS solution can provide mobile development capabilities integrated directly within the development environment, providing a single platform for web and mobile applications. Developers can use the same model-driven approach to build new mobile applications, and mobilize existing apps without writing additional code.

Using a services-based approach, developers can generate the required mobile and server components necessary to support business logic and data access during runtime. The high-productivity environment can support multiple devices without having to write device-specific code, including apps that leverage device-specific capabilities like calendars, contact lists, cameras and more.

This multi-platform approach means you can literally "build once, deploy anywhere"— boosting developer efficiency and your market capabilities at the same time. Your company can deploy the same app to both Apple and Android app stores, and many more as well, without being locked in to a particular vendor or device.

THE BEST-IN-CLASS APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

DRAG **&** **DROP**

MODEL-DRIVEN DEVELOPMENT

Allows users to create compelling business applications with drag-and-drop tools and preset templates; also provides standards-based development using JavaScript and integration with other systems using Web Services, for more advanced developers

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EASY TO USE

Provides a GUI that can satisfy the requirements of development teams, IT staff and citizen developers in LOB units

EXTENSIVE DATA INTEGRATION

Allows developers to easily and securely connect to data both inside and outside a company's firewall using standards-based connectivity

FLEXIBLE DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS

Supports whatever deployment method an organization desires, from on-premise/off-premise, private or public cloud, data center, and hybrid environments

OPTIMIZED FOR CROSS-PLATFORM MOBILITY

Includes support for mobile devices so developers can easily create apps optimized for each device and build highly intuitive applications that leverage device-specific capabilities without writing custom code

CONCLUSION

Closing the app gap is going to be critical for today's businesses for many reasons—engaging customers, remaining agile and retaining employees among them. Companies that can provide software solutions to help attain higher productivity levels can gain market share, grow revenue and boost their own development efficiency with PaaS. There has never been a better time for your company to consider partnering with a trusted, established high-productivity PaaS solution provider.

IT'S ALL ABOUT CHOICE

At Progress, we're providing the choices your business needs. Progress Pacific provides an intuitive, easy-to-use platform where the complexities of application development and data access are removed, enabling developers and businesses to simply focus on solving their market and business problems. For more information, visit: progress.com/pacific

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Benedict is the vice president and general manager of the Progress® Pacific™ cloud platform and Progress® OpenEdge® product line and is responsible for leading the company's Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) and application development businesses. He has previously held other senior leadership roles at Progress in product management, operations, strategy and sales. Prior to joining Progress, Benedict served as director of product management and marketing for online products at Engage Technologies, where he launched the first cloud-to-on-premise campaign distribution network, Engage AudienceNet.

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