

HOW PARTNER4MEDIA MAKES PROGRESS

CASE STUDY
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THE CHALLENGE: REALIZING A PERCEIVED MARKET OPPORTUNITY

Partner4media, a Progress Partner since 1990, provides software solutions for publishers and media companies. Located in Klosterneuburg, Austria, the company serves as a consultancy and systems vendor. Specializing in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) software for publishers and the mail order trade, partner4media has successfully realized significant cost-reducing, efficiency-building IT projects across Europe. Recently, the company introduced Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions in addition to its traditional on-premises systems.

In 2014, partner4media studied various market segments, and ultimately decided to provide cloud solutions for clubs and nonprofit organizations. Working in related sectors, the managing directors had noticed that the boards of clubs and nonprofit organizations needed to cover numerous tasks, from membership management, media relations, marketing and event management to accounting.

Partner4media saw a chance to engage with many new clients in this space if it could offer a stronger solution than was currently available. "Even though the selection of club management products is huge, we quickly spotted a niche. The available options are either free software for small clubs or costly professional solutions for organizations with hundreds or thousands of members," said Dr. Wolfgang Vitovec, Managing Director of partner4media.

Their vision called for a mid-level solution that would be affordable for club clients, who often operate on modest budgets. A large-scale software development project would not be justified in terms of return on investment (ROI). However, the product was somewhat speculative. Although developers felt confident about project success, they wanted to bring out a prototype first so they could test and modify the product based on early feedback. Unfortunately, the existing software development tooling was not suited for this kind of rapid, low cost, iterative development.

partner4media

CHALLENGE

Wanted to tap into a new market with a SaaS product but be able to develop it quickly and inexpensively.

SOLUTION

Progress Rollbase enabled the creation of a new SaaS solution in just four days, one-fifth the time usually required.

RESULTS

A profitable SaaS product launch for the company, as well as a newfound ability to enter new markets easily.

LEVERAGING THE PROGRESS ROLLBASE RAPID APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT PLATFORM

Partner4media looked for a way to develop the new mid-level solution, called “Cloud-Club,” that met timelines and financial parameters. Turning to its long-term platform partner, the company evaluated Progress Rollbase. Rollbase combines a Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) environment with application hosting and an intuitive, web-based interface for coding-optional application development. Non-technical users can build web applications in Rollbase using templates with drag-and-drop functionality and wizards that enable the user to define data, objects, workflows and more. A sophisticated development shop like partner4media would be able to take full advantage of standard APIs and JavaScript within Rollbase.

Progress Rollbase addressed constraints partner4media faced with Cloud-Club, enabling partner4media to develop Cloud-Club quickly and inexpensively. The tool would also allow for multiple iterations of the live product as early customers provided feedback on usability and features. Creating a working prototype took only four days—about one-fifth of the time that they would normally allocate to build a SaaS prototype with a conventional development environment. In that brief period, partner4media was able to develop Cloud-Club with modules for member administration, address management, event management, project accounting and document management. According to Vitovec, “The vast majority of the work was a matter of dragging and dropping on Progress Rollbase—only around 10 percent required ‘real’ coding. This dramatically reduces the time needed to complete a prototype or roll out a finished application.”

The examples and templates included with Progress Rollbase were easily customized and integrated into Cloud-Club, providing a helpful starting point for beginners and convenience for experienced developers. For example, partner4media used templates to support the upload of any kind of club-related document—directives, circulars from parent organizations, meeting minutes and financial plans—to the cloud, and to let members access them on the club website or a Rollbase portal according to their user rights.

“The feature set of our Progress Rollbase-based application makes it an attractive choice for small and medium-sized organizations,” said Vitovec. “With a cloud solution, sports, music, cultural and environmental organizations do not need to invest heavily in computers or software, but simply pay a monthly subscription fee.” With Progress Rollbase, organizations can access up-to-date information in a private cloud anywhere, anytime, without having to install proprietary hardware or software.

Progress Rollbase gave partner4media’s developers greater productivity and flexibility, as well. With Rollbase, developers focus on the ultimate purpose of the software from the perspective of its subsequent users, rather than getting bogged down in the design details, input and output functions, objects and graphics. Report formats can be defined using a convenient point-and-click wizard. Development takes place on a higher level of abstraction, where the logical data model is generated automatically and can be modified later, as required, and significantly increasing productivity. The speed of development did not affect quality, however: Cloud-Club won the Progress App Dev Challenge 2014 for partner4media.

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*Dr. Wolfgang Vitovec,
Managing Director,
partner4media*

“Progress is exemplary in its support for ISVs developing cloud applications, helping them to boost their productivity and gain a competitive edge. The speed and ease of development gives us the opportunity to tap into a new client segment in custom software, in addition to our standard software for CRM, publishers and the mail order trade.”

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Managing Director,
partner4media*

A PROFITABLE ENTRY INTO A NEW KIND OF SOFTWARE BUSINESS

The Cloud-Club experience has been a business success for partner4media. The project, which launched profitably, demonstrated the company could create SaaS solutions rapidly. With Rollbase, partner4media is equipped for RAD, which effectively puts them into an entirely new and highly desirable business sector. "Progress is exemplary in its support for ISVs developing cloud applications, helping them to boost their productivity and gain a competitive edge," said Vitovec. "The speed and ease of development gives us the opportunity to tap into a new client segment in custom software, in addition to our standard software for CRM, publishers and the mail order trade."

Developers at partner4media are not the only ones who benefit from Rollbase; it's a boon to users, as well. For instance, club chairpersons, secretaries and treasurers no longer need to hold regular board meetings at the organization's headquarters. They can access the Cloud-Club application anywhere using their web browsers. All key documents are accessible to authorized users in a portal at all times. Board members can securely collaborate on editing documents, lists and event schedules in the cloud, streamlining communication, coordination and decision-making.

Partner4media is now exploring the development of additional products on Rollbase, while simultaneously migrating some of its existing applications to the new platform. As Vitovec explained, "We want to expand our client base with our new approach, and we believe we can do so successfully with Progress Rollbase, an underlying technology that is reliable and virtually maintenance-free."

ABOUT PARTNER4MEDIA

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<http://www.partner4media.com/>

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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PROGRESS APP DEV CHALLENGE 2014

The Progress App Dev Challenge 2014 invited participants from 14 European countries to compete for the title of the best app developer. The winning entry came from partner4media. The company's Cloud-Club application provides an innovative and cost-effective way to manage clubs and nonprofit organizations. The SaaS application is hosted by a cloud provider, does not require local hardware or software to be installed or maintained, and delivers a wealth of functions—from membership management and scheduling and event management to project accounting.