



Client

bluebee™

Leveraging Progress® OpenEdge® as the underlying platform for its state-of-the-art ERP application, Bluebee Software has continued to lead the market and grow its business by evolving its application to support changing customer requirements for “anytime, anywhere” access to business information.

Challenge

Support rapidly changing market and customer demands

Web and Mobility Pioneer Bluebee Stays One Step Ahead with Progress OpenEdge

Solution

Leveraging Progress® OpenEdge® as the underlying platform for its state-of-the-art ERP SaaS application

Where so many companies view change as an obstacle, Bluebee Software has always understood that change equals opportunity. When the Quebec-based company first engaged Progress 15 years ago, it was a systems integrator. Since that time, Bluebee has grown into a leading software and service provider to the distribution and manufacturing sectors, continuously evolving its Progress OpenEdge-based ERP application to meet customer demand.

Benefit

Able to continuously modernize its existing application to support the mobile and web needs of its customers and react much faster than the competition

Over the decade Bluebee has worked with Progress OpenEdge, the market has undergone dramatic change, fueled in large part by widespread use of the web and laptops and the advent of mobile devices like the smartphone and tablet. And according to Sylvain Laporte, President of Bluebee Software, the company’s decision to use Progress OpenEdge has played a significant role in its ability to capitalize on those changes, continue to grow its business, and establish itself as a web and mobility leader.

“Today’s business competes in an ever-changing, always-connected environment. Laptops, smartphones and tablets are now the norm for today’s business users. Having the ability to quickly make business and technical changes to meet market and customer demand is absolutely critical for success. Where many software companies have either struggled or scrambled to meet customers’ requirements to connect to their business anytime, anywhere, Bluebee’s business has thrived. OpenEdge has enabled us to continuously modernize our existing application to support the mobile and web needs of our customers—without making any changes to the underlying architecture.”

An Architecture Built for the Future—Web, Mobile and Beyond

Bluebee has truly been a forward-looking pioneer, recognizing the potential of the web and mobility long before they became trends. At a time when most software companies weren’t even thinking about mobility, Bluebee was already supporting mobile access to BlackBerry users going back to 2006.

In its search for an underlying platform for its application, Bluebee realized that its success hinged on the ability to stay one step ahead of its customers and ensure their ongoing success. That meant they needed to architect their solution to easily facilitate integration and support

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Sylvain Laporte
President, Bluebee Software

change so they could be responsive to evolving business requirements and keep atop of what the market not only needs today, but what it demands tomorrow.

Bluebee recognized years ago that mobility would become the wave of the future. And the company had the foresight to know that businesses would demand more than just access; they would require speed of access and the flexibility to control the type of data different people had access to. The company also predicted that different devices would serve different needs. For example, Blackberry’s primary focus has been on email access and the security of that access, whereas other devices, like tablets or the iPhone, focus on delivering more graphical information for reporting, financial analysis, sales forecasting, etc.

“We needed an architecture that could support all of those different requirements,” explains Jean-Marc Blanchette, Vice President of Bluebee. “In our search for a technology partner we found that Progress OpenEdge offered the flexibility and open architecture we needed not only to keep up with market change, but to actually lead the market. Once the mobility craze hit, our underlying OpenEdge architecture enabled us to react much faster than our competition. Today with OpenEdge, we can easily expand on any current or future platform—mobile, iPad, Android, or any other type of web-based system.”

The company’s fully web-based ERP application is offered through Software as a Service (SaaS) and enables its customers to extend their information and business process where they really need it—through intelligent telephony, mobile access to the web, or any other wireless technology.

After more than 10 years of expertise and leadership in web development with Progress tools, Bluebee has opened a whole new business practice by offering consulting services to a wider Progress population to help modernize character-based and GUI applications and provide new technologies via the Bluebee framework and custom development.

Flexibility to Support Constant Change Key to Ongoing Success

To maintain a state-of-the-art application, Bluebee is constantly reevaluating the tools they use. “Our main goal is the solution and the product we offer the customer, not the underlying tool or language,” says Blanchette. “But just like us, Progress is continuously investing in its technology and business—evolving to meet the needs of the market. And over the years, OpenEdge has continued to be one of the lowest total cost of ownership (TCO) platforms out there—which is very important to us.”

Bluebee’s ERP application has undergone tremendous change over the years to remain modern, moving from a “green screen,” character-based system to the web with support for SaaS and mobility. “Progress is the only thing that hasn’t changed over the past ten years,” says Laporte. “Despite all of the advancements we have made to modernize our system, we haven’t had to make any significant changes to the code or business logic. This is the reason we can respond so quickly to customer requests and do so at minimal expense.”

This degree of flexibility is particularly important to Bluebee because every customer requires a customized version of its application. “One of the most important things to us is that we are able to help our customers constantly optimize their business processes,” explains Laporte. “Meeting the unique needs of our customers requires that we only make simple changes to the surface of our solution, like the UI, not to the underlying architecture. And because our architecture is so open and flexible, we can easily integrate with existing systems and new technologies. This is the reason we can continuously offer so many new features and possibilities to our customers.”

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Case Study: Greenhouse Manufacturer Optimizes Its Business with Bluebee

One example of how Bluebee is helping its customers drive success is its work with an internationally recognized designer and manufacturer of greenhouses. Catering to businesses all over the world, the company wanted to optimize and streamline its operations by extending the use of an ERP system to mobile devices.

Prior to using Bluebee’s web application, a representative would meet with a potential client to gather requirements based on size, culture, weather conditions, building configuration, etc. After the initial meeting it would take at least seven or more days for the client to receive a quote for the project. Once the terms of the deal were finalized, the plans would be drafted and approved by an engineer or architect. The client would then forward all of the documents to City Hall for approval. Eventually, after a number of weeks, a building permit would be issued, and construction could begin.

Today, with the Bluebee web application configuration wizard, the greenhouse manufacturer’s representative can now issue a detailed quote with both the specs and the architect’s approved plans in less than 15 minutes versus the previous seven days; the company completes this process almost 45 times faster than before. Whereas the entire sales process once took days and even weeks, today it takes just minutes. As a result, the client can begin construction of the new greenhouse faster; customer service is improved; there is far less overhead involved with processes such as tracking the plans, purchase orders and building permits; and the company is closing deals faster and recognizing revenue sooner.

SaaS Delivers Ongoing Benefits to Bluebee and Its Customers

Unlike most of its competitors, Bluebee delivers its solution via SaaS, which, Laporte explains, is a model that continues to deliver benefits to the organization and to its customers. “SaaS is very attractive to our customers. It has allowed us to remove the largest obstacle for those prospects that don’t move forward in the sales cycle—budget restrictions. Rather than making a large investment up-front by purchasing software licensing, our customers simply pay a monthly fee, based on the number of users.”

SaaS also gives customers a greater sense of control. Laporte explains: “They know we aren’t going to take their money and run; we are in it for the long-term. We know, and they know, that if we don’t continue to deliver, they can simply cancel their contract without being out-of-pocket for anything more than the monthly fees.”

For the organization itself, SaaS has dramatically reduced the average sales cycle. “We are closing deals far faster than we were before because we don’t have to contend with the issues of high, up-front implementation costs—the software plus the service plus the bells and whistles,” says Laporte. “With SaaS we can say: ‘You get a solution customized to your specific needs along with all the bells and whistles for a flat monthly fee.’ That is a powerful proposal.”

About Progress

Progress (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global leader in application development, empowering the digital transformation organizations need to create and sustain engaging user experiences in today’s evolving marketplace. With offerings spanning web, mobile and data for on-premise and cloud environments, Progress powers startups and industry titans worldwide, promoting success one customer at a time. Learn about Progress at www.progress.com or 1-781-280-4000.

Bluebee also appreciates the recurring revenue stream. “When you have a lot of customers running SaaS, the profit adds up,” says Laporte. “In this economy, it is reassuring to know that we can count on certain revenue coming in month-to-month.”

A True Partnership

Based on his 15 years of experience with Progress, Laporte believes that the company is extremely dedicated to aligning itself with its application partners. “We’ve been long-time Progress developers because the product is so solid. But we also respect that Progress has excellent expertise. They really took the time to understand what we do—who our market is and what customers are looking for from our solutions. For me, the proof came with the amount of time and energy they devoted to our account—helping us to really grow our business. The caliber of the consultants, the time they take to visit with us, their respect for our business, requirements and opinions—it all adds up to a real sense of partnership.”

About Bluebee

Bluebee is an agile team of distribution and manufacturing experts with over 25 years of experience in the software development business. We create long lasting business relationships by listening to our clients needs, and proving our value quickly. Our in-depth knowledge of Progress and a deep understanding of business issues help our clients increase efficiency in their business processes and create significant competitive advantages with real-time visibility and response, anywhere, anytime. Address: 5125 Du Trianon # 440, Montreal, QC Canada H1M 2S5. Phone: 514-351-5555.

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