

CASE STUDY

Company

Athletic footwear manufacturer

Retail network of 2,500 stores worldwide

Retail Calendar

Collaborative Information System

Components

DreamFactory Services Platform (DSP)

SQL Database

Windows Azure Infrastructure Service

Functionality

Event scheduling and collaboration

Schedule events for specific groups

Set permissions for access and visibility

Enable store personnel to add events to the calendar and send messages to peers

Attach multiple documents to each event

Associate threaded discussions between management and store personnel with specific events

Athletic Footwear Manufacturer Rallies the Team with DreamFactory

With more than 2,500 retail stores worldwide—500 company-owned locations and 2,000 partner locations—the athletic footwear company needed a collaborative information system to connect the stores with corporate headquarters and exchange information efficiently and securely.

Corralling Communications Between Headquarters and Retail Stores

SITUATION The company had a system in place to manage communications with retail stores. It featured a WebLogic JSP interface connected to an Oracle database; Microsoft SharePoint was used to disseminate documents. Unfortunately, the system was problematic. Communication was only one way—from headquarters to the stores. As a result, store personnel couldn't communicate with management or with each other using the system. Search capabilities were limited—even finding past or upcoming events was difficult—and file attachments weren't supported.

As a result, personnel circumvented the system by creating workgroups on social media platforms—such as Facebook and YouTube—and uploaded documents and videos. With multiple vehicles in use, the company experienced breakdowns in communication and heightened security concerns. The system was slated for improvement, but enhancements were extremely slow and expensive to implement.

REQUIREMENTS When the DreamFactory team arrived on the scene, the company had created a retail calendar design that would facilitate communication and scheduling between headquarters and approximately 500 high-profile, high-traffic stores around the world. Once implemented, a second version of the calendar would be launched for retail partners—who sell related products—in 2,000 stores. The calendar would enable headquarters to schedule events for designated groups of retail stores, and to control user access and event visibility with an extensive permission system.

The retail stores also needed to add events to the calendar and send messages to their peers. The calendar allows management to attach multiple documents to each event, as well as threaded discussions between management and store employees. Speed and performance were key to ensuring adoption. Because of typically high turnover in retail staff, ease of use was also a consideration—new employees and changes in store



DreamFactory Services Platform

With DreamFactory, a small team of front-end developers—or even a single engineer—can create and deploy sophisticated mobile enterprise applications without server-side software development.

For More Information

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management staff had to achieve proficiency quickly. The calendar needed powerful search tools—employees needed to locate an event or document by text string, date, or predefined category filters.

SOLUTION After evaluating several platforms—including Cisco WebEx Connect and Salesforce—the company chose the DreamFactory Services Platform (DSP), combined with SQL Database for the back end. We installed DreamFactory on the elastic computing partition of a Windows Azure server—a choice that provides seamless scalability. And because only compressed services travel across the wire, bandwidth requirements are dramatically lower—increasing performance and decreasing costs.

DreamFactory provides a layer of visualization for the hosted application to use. As a result, we were able to port the company’s existing calendar to SQL Database in just a few days—performance improved dramatically. Although the initial version of the calendar was written in our rich client, our standards-based service architecture is compatible with a wide range of client software, and fully supports HTML5 and JavaScript.

Capitalizing on the Benefits

| Legacy Solution | DreamFactory Solution |
|---|--|
| Hosted application with limited capabilities | Quick transition to the cloud |
| Operated only inside the customer network | Switch between clouds or data centers easily |
| Limited connectivity and network bandwidth in some stores curtailed use | Rich client model supports stores with low bandwidth and occasional connection |
| Required installation in regional data centers | Wide geographic coverage and good security |
| Slow development cycle inhibited adoption | Facilitates fast development and deployment |

With DreamFactory, the company is able to use familiar tools and processes to manage application deployment, security, and costs. They use Azure BLOB for document storage and standard SQL tools for backup. The DreamFactory Admin Console makes it easy to manage users, user permissions, and database schema on their SQL Database. User permissions are enforced on the server side to enhance security and prevent accidental data loss.

Today, the company runs the calendar on nine instances in 17 languages for more than 2,000 individual users. Individual instances of the application can be placed in the regional data that corresponds to the geographic location of each retail group. Performance can be easily scaled up or down, and additional cloud assets—such as memory or processing—can simply be purchased when needed.

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