

Bluewolf Stays Ahead of the Pack With Force.com



Industry

Hi-Tech Software & Services

Geographies

U.S. and U.K.

Challenges

- ❑ Quickly deliver new solutions to clients; easily iterate over time
- ❑ Develop cloud computing applications to meet a diverse set of client needs
- ❑ Cost-effective development and agile consulting model

Solution

Bluewolf uses Force.com to extend client success beyond CRM. The firm works with clients to quickly build and deploy SaaS solutions based on the clients' unique business processes. The firm had developed custom applications for data and business system integration, custom workflows, lead qualification, asset management, partner management, and advanced analytics.

Results

- ❑ Support business processes beyond CRM
- ❑ Faster development times and easy customization with Force.com
- ❑ Ability to constantly iterate supports new agile consulting model

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— Corinne Sklar
 VP of Marketing

“Iterate or die,” is a phrase often heard around Bluewolf’s offices. The firm originated “agile consulting,” a new consulting approach structured around quick, 30-day deliverables that are constantly tweaked to keep pace with business changes. One of the first salesforce.com partners, Bluewolf initially concentrated on CRM implementation. Building on its early success, the firm iterated on its own business to focus on next generation solutions and Force.com. With continued rapid growth, Bluewolf must be doing something right.

Cloud Computing Spurs Agile Consulting

Bluewolf was formed in 2000, as many consulting companies floundered with the end of the dot com bubble. Founders Eric Berridge and Michael Kirven had seen an opportunity for more affordable enterprise services, a need that intensified when the bubble burst. When salesforce.com and cloud computing services began to get traction, Berridge and Kirven found a way to deliver on their vision.

Traditional consulting follows a “waterfall model,” in which project phases flow from one into the next until the entire project is completed. By contrast, Bluewolf’s approach is built on smaller, iterative steps that generate measurable results in short time frames, usually 30-60-90 days. Instead of massive deliverables, there is a steady flow of smaller ones, with constant modification. “We use new technologies to deliver solutions quickly,” says Corinne Sklar, vice president of marketing at Bluewolf. “So we can continually innovate and improve. Our process accepts change; we understand that your business is always reacting to the constantly changing business environment.”

Bluewolf quickly built expertise in software-as-a-service (SaaS), which enabled IT projects to move at a speed which simply wasn’t possible in a world of servers, routers, and traditional software. It was only natural that Bluewolf, the originator of agile consulting, was aligned from the beginning with salesforce.com, the SaaS and cloud computing pioneer.

Success Drives Complexity

Bluewolf initially focused on CRM implementation for media, financial services, commercial banking, insurance, and technology companies. The firm works with clients to identify business process needs, and speedily roll out solutions with a strong focus on total user adoption. Clients see success quickly and as a result, Bluewolf’s business has exploded. To date, the firm has implemented CRM for more than 2,500 clients.

After initial Salesforce CRM success, many of Bluewolf’s clients want to apply the same methodologies to more complex business needs. Cloud computing has moved closer to mainstream, and companies are losing their fear of moving additional processes there. “Our clients are increasingly asking for Force.com solutions. They want to extend their success with Salesforce CRM beyond customer management and still get the benefits of speed, ease of deployment, and low cost,” says Sklar. “Today we’re finding that about 70% of our projects are customizations or outside of sales force automation. We’re seeing increased demand in channel management, customer service and support, and the entire quote to order process.”

With the introduction of Force.com Code and Force.com Pages, the increasing robustness of the Force.com platform provided the tools to build almost any kind of business app, from simple to sophisticated, in the cloud, and automatically deploy it as a service. Bluewolf client needs range from data and business system integration, to business process optimization, custom workflows, lead qualification, asset management, partner management, and advanced analytics.

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Focusing in on Force.com

For a leading performing rights organization, which licenses and distributes royalties for public performances of copyrighted works, Bluewolf developed an application to help manage the complexities of myriad licensing arrangements. The Force.com-based application monitors various processes including rates, collections, and adjustments. It eliminates the organization’s need for internal IT resources, and automates handoff and follow up processes.

Another successful application was developed for one of the country’s largest cable operators to help it qualify leads based on how close a prospect is located to a current customer or cable access point. The Force.com-based application integrates third-party geographic data, and identifies the related construction costs – if any – for new accounts and makes the data available to sales through the Salesforce interface.

Bluewolf typically launches an initial solution within 90 days of kick off, or less, with subsequent modifications made over time. “We worked with s-controls for many years, but now we do everything in Force.com Code,” says Sklar. “No other platform let us develop and deploy complex applications in such a short time. We couldn’t be as agile – or as successful – without the growth of SaaS, cloud computing, and especially Force.com.”

Reaching Customers Via the AppExchange

Bluewolf also makes applications available directly to customers via the AppExchange. Its initial offering was the Integration Pack, a popular on-demand integration solution that connects traditional on premise data systems with Salesforce CRM. Subsequently, the firm has launched Force.com native applications born out of specific client engagements.

PolicyTrak is designed to help organizations manage all aspects associated with complex insurance policy administration. It lets reps automatically generate RFPs, quotes, policies and renewals, puts in place complex workflow and validation rules, and provides integration with ERP systems. “PolicyTrak developed out of our work with Hartford Insurance,” says Sklar, “But because it was built with Force.com, it can be easily adapted to meet the specific needs of other insurers.”

Another Force.com native application is MediaTrak, which helps media companies manage clients and ad booking. One component tracks the complex relationships between brands, advertisers, and agencies. Another schedules and books multiple media orders and computes complex commission splits. The media-specific interface includes customized reports and dashboards.

Change for the Future

Bluewolf’s business continues to grow rapidly. Today the privately-held firm has more than 200 employees, offices around the globe, and a consistently rapid growth. Despite today’s challenging economic conditions, Sklar remains cautiously optimistic about the firm’s future and clients’ continued investment in innovation.

Bluewolf’s experience in using Force.com to help clients get things done more quickly – and cheaply – than before, is a logical source for help in a downturn. Sklar explains, “The Force.com platform allows us to deliver on our clients’ need for rapid change and business evolution. With Force.com and our agile process we can react to the market more quickly, help clients be more competitive, and realize value in record time.”

When not helping new clients start their migration to the cloud, the firm continues to develop its native Force.com applications and investigate new ones. “We continually hone our applications based on experience with our clients,” says Sklar. “When we see changes in the business, Force.com makes it easy for us to keep up.” One thing is for sure, Bluewolf will continue to iterate.

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