

Foxwoods' gamble on Progress[®] pays off with improved customer loyalty, enhanced operational efficiency and increased revenue.

CHALLENGE

Foxwoods wanted to integrate its online and offline channels to increase customer loyalty and revenue while driving down operating costs.

SOLUTION

The organization chose the Progress OpenEdge[®] business platform to develop its Casino Accounting and Management System (CAMS).

WHY PROGRESS[®] SOFTWARE

Foxwoods chose OpenEdge based on its reliability and scalability, as well as the ability to quickly deploy and manage applications specialized to its needs.

BENEFIT

Foxwoods has exceeded its online reservations goals by 100%, and transaction volume has successfully scaled more than 2,000%.

CASE STUDY

CONTROLLING BUSINESS DESTINY THROUGH COMPLETE CONTROL OVER APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

Opened in 1992, Foxwoods Resort Casino quickly grew to become the largest resort casino in the world, with more than 320,000 square feet of gaming space in a complex that covers 4.7 million square feet and serves more than 40,000 guests per day. With 6 casinos, 1,400 guest rooms and suites, 24 restaurants, 55,000 square feet of meeting space, 25 conference rooms and plans for future expansion, it is critical that Foxwoods has an IT infrastructure that is scalable, flexible and 100% reliable.

Central to Foxwoods' successful business strategy is an IT strategy that focuses on internal development of critical business applications using open standards. Foxwoods' executives made a strategic decision before opening the resort to avoid off-the-shelf applications and instead rely on internally developed core business applications.

The organization selected Progress[®] Software technology for designing business and gaming applications and has never looked back.

According to Brian Charette, executive director of resort systems, "We understood that to control our business destiny we would need complete control over application development. We selected Progress technology for our casino management and patron management applications based on its reliability and scalability, as well as the ability Progress provides for us to quickly deploy and manage applications specialized to our needs."

MAINTAINING CUSTOMER LOYALTY AND INCREASING REVENUE WITH A FLEXIBLE SOLUTION

The ability to offer rich and highly customized customer loyalty promotions is key to repeat business. By integrating gaming and operational applications, Foxwoods focuses its application development efforts on increasing operational efficiency and better serving its customers.

“With Progress we have gained an edge through flexibility and adaptability. We can build the applications that fit our business, leverage information technology to better serve our customers, and efficiently deliver the experiences that keep them coming back.”

— Brian Charette
Director of Resort
Systems

Through its “Wampum Rewards” customer loyalty program, Foxwoods is able to centrally track and manage customer activity through the resort. For example, guests can purchase rooms, meals, tickets for entertainment events, and items from retail shops using a Wampum Rewards card, and they can also use it for gaming activities—including slot machines, Keno, table games, horse race wagering and poker.

Foxwoods centralizes all customer transactions from the Wampum Rewards program in a single, highly scalable database and carefully analyzes and segments customers to support frequent promotions that drive revenue growth. Because all customer transactions are captured in real time, the marketing department can truly understand buying patterns across all of the products and services offered by Foxwoods. They can then quickly create cross-selling and up-selling promotions that garner incremental business from existing customers.

For example, Foxwoods offered a recent promotion on a Sunday offering slot machine customers random cash prizes every 15 minutes. The promotion application was developed in less than two days, and it successfully encouraged an increased use of the slot machines that generated an extra half-million dollars to the bottom line. Foxwoods now operates continuous player promotions 365 days a year to encourage repeat visits and generate higher average revenues from customer segments.

“The marketing staff can now identify trends and create customized promotions that increase revenues, and the operations staff can request enhancements that increase efficiencies,” said Charette. “Our ability to fulfill user requests is not restricted by the limitations of an application. If our users can create the proper business case we’ll build the application capabilities to support their goals. Progress has allowed us to gain a competitive advantage by being nimble enough to swiftly respond to business demands.”

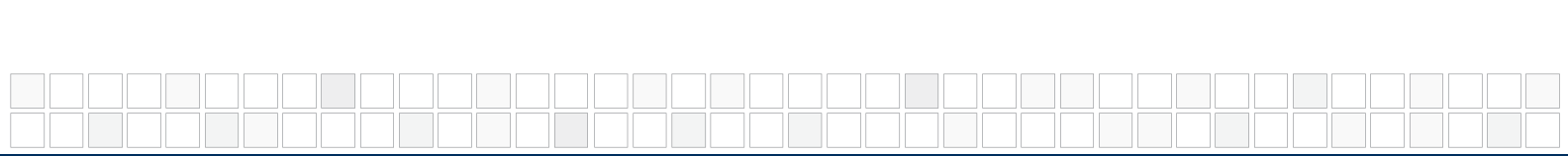
ACHIEVING A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE THROUGH QUICK DEVELOPMENT AND LOW COST OF OWNERSHIP

Foxwoods developed its Casino Accounting and Management System (CAMS) to support the opening of the business and continues to evolve CAMS to support emerging application requirements.

“We run our casino business on Progress technology,” said Charette. “CAMS allows us to offer our guests a seamless environment to enjoy themselves throughout our facilities, with all transactions handled in the background by Progress.”

CAMS integrates the many casino and resort applications that Foxwoods relies on 24x7x365. Virtually all customer-facing applications are developed within CAMS, with all transactions running through the Progress OpenEdge RDBMS. Foxwoods leverages existing infrastructure and heavily reuses code to reduce development costs.

For example, Foxwoods awards points for gaming play and develops custom promotions based on accumulated points. “The flexibility of our Progress environment allows us to reuse business logic to develop new applications much faster than our competitors can,”



said Charette. “We don't have to rewrite the logic for accumulating or redeeming points for each application. Our reuse of business logic results in improved productivity, lower costs, and faster time-to-deployment. In some cases we have even delivered critical application enhancement requests in a matter of hours.”

IMPROVING OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY THROUGH ENTERPRISE-WIDE INTEGRATION

Managing a massive business like Foxwoods Resort Casino requires exceptional levels of operational efficiency. The Progress® OpenEdge® Application Server provides Foxwoods employees centralized access to applications from Web browsers, graphical interfaces, and even wireless devices. The Progress® OpenEdge® DataServers provide transparent, extensible access from both Progress and non-Progress data sources.

The resort casino has successfully integrated online and offline channels while driving down operating costs. “We recently sought to increase operational efficiency by consolidating inventory for both online and offline reservations, thus avoiding the traditional industry practice of segmenting and reserving blocks of rooms for Web-based bookings,” stated Charette. “The flexibility of Progress has allowed us to create a real-time room inventory application shared by both the Web site and the call center. This gives us real-time visibility into inventory so we can maximize bookings. Within 6 months of deployment, we exceeded our online reservations goals by 100%. Call center staff now receive fewer calls for reservations and can focus their time more on selling rather than on handling preliminary inquiries.”

Last year, Foxwoods deployed Progress® SonicMQ® for all publish-and-subscribe messaging. Foxwoods also relies on it to integrate the customer database with third-party applications and replicate data into a RedBrick data warehouse. Charette said, “SonicMQ allows us to quickly replicate data and it facilitates our ultimate goal of consolidating all information across the enterprise.”

PROGRESS SCALES TO SUPPORT RAPID BUSINESS

Foxwoods is developing new applications at an ever-quickenning pace. In 2003, the internal application development staff—consisting of just four business analysts and a single developer— fulfilled 355 application and feature requests from departmental users. Foxwoods does not even need a dedicated database administrator. The OpenEdge RDBMS now supports over 8 million transactional writes and over 4 million record reads per day, and Foxwoods has experienced no unscheduled downtime.

As new CAMS applications and enhancements are introduced, the transaction volumes are expanding exponentially. Charette stated, “We've scaled transactions about 2,000% over the last two years. It is hard to imagine what the transaction volumes will be two years from now, but we know we have an infrastructure that can scale to handle our evolving needs.”

Foxwoods is now planning to upgrade to OpenEdge Release 10, and will shortly be deploying Progress OpenEdge Management to optimize availability and performance of CAMS applications.

Charette concluded, "If we had settled for packaged applications we'd still be waiting in line like everybody else for new features and enhancements. But through our business relationship with Progress, we have gained an edge through flexibility and adaptability. We can build the applications that fit our business, leverage information technology to better serve our customers, and efficiently deliver the experiences that keep them coming back."

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ABOUT PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (Nasdaq: PRGS) provides application infrastructure software for the development, deployment, integration and management of business applications. Our goal is to maximize the benefits of information technology while minimizing its complexity and total cost of ownership.

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