

Gevity Leverages DataDirect XQuery™ to Integrate Salesforce.com® and Oracle DB providing an Innovative, Real-time Sales Pricing Engine

Customer Profile

Gevity provides comprehensive employment management solutions to help clients improve profits, sales and customer satisfaction through superior people management practices. Gevity has over 1,000 employees, servicing over 8,000 small and medium-sized client businesses, with over 136,000 client employees.

The Gevity Pricing Engine is a powerful, web-based tool that combines sales force automation, territory management and pricing functions in one seamless application. This product enables the Gevity Business Development Managers to secure clients by providing prospects with fast, accurate pricing information for outsourced HR services. The Gevity Pricing Engine is accessible from any computer/mobile device with an Internet connection – freeing Gevity Business Development Managers to work anywhere.

Understanding the Business Challenge

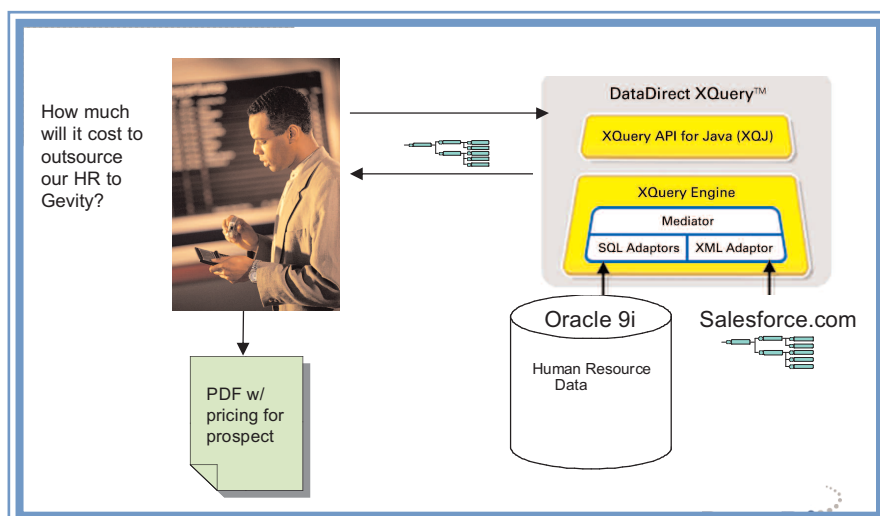
Gevity has created a leading-edge culture towards information technology. Technology is viewed as a key to maintaining a competitive advantage – allowing Gevity Business Development Managers to deliver world-class solutions and service in a wireless world. The team at Gevity designed a Web-based sales tool that empowers their sales team to price proposals in real-time, effectively eliminating their traditional competitors who take days to do the same thing.

The schedule defined for the Pricing Engine project was aggressive – requiring solutions to maximize development resources. Developing and deploying the new Gevity Pricing Engine required Web developers to aggregate Web services from Salesforce.com with relational data found in multiple Oracle 9i databases and integrate that with an XML-based user interface. This proved to be a significant undertaking.

Gevity customer data is stored in Oracle 9i databases, while the interface for the Gevity Pricing Engine was written in XML. The development team at Gevity used proprietary tools to work with the XML documents. The process to handle changes became tedious, with lots of manual coding involved using these tools. Gevity needed a generic, standards-based solution to work with the relational and XML data that would be easy for developers to learn and use, comply with architectural requirements, and deliver strong performance metrics. DataDirect XQuery™ provided all these and allowed Gevity to deliver their project within the timeline even though it was using a new query language.

DataDirect XQuery provided a generic standards-based solution to work with relational and XML data that was easy for developers to learn and use, fit easily into our architecture, and performs well.

Madhavan Rangarajan,
Java Architect, Gevity



Choosing the Right Solution – DataDirect XQuery™

Gevity chose XML as the interface to connect the Pricing Engine's different modules, for example, the business logic and the user interface. With XML as the interface, the user agent may be a web browser, a BlackBerry®, or even a cell phone; it doesn't matter to the implementation of the business logic. Then, the question becomes - what's the best way to retrieve XML from all data sources? Gevity web developers were using proprietary XML tools to extract XML from the Oracle database and it became increasingly difficult for them to keep up with the changes in the proprietary solutions.



Enter XQuery. Gevity had experience with early versions of XQuery implementations, and it was clear that the XQuery language was designed so developers could write less code to get XML from any data source and could provide a better solution to development issues.

After an exhaustive evaluation of XQuery solutions, Gevity chose DataDirect XQuery. The DataDirect XQuery offering follows the XQuery standard lock-step, which was critical to the Gevity architecture committee. Beyond the perfect technical fit for Gevity, Rangarajan adds, "We felt that it was important to know that the product we selected would be around for the future. DataDirect's length of time in the market and financial stability gave us confidence in their longevity."

Realizing the Benefits of DataDirect XQuery™

The true benefit of DataDirect XQuery to Gevity is that it delivered on the promise of universal data integration – allowing any relational data source to be integrated with Web services and XML. Madhavan Rangarajan, Java Architect at Gevity sees the universal data integration capabilities of DataDirect XQuery as a cornerstone to the Gevity Web services strategy. "Our business applications consume Web services from our partners. These Web services are integrated with raw data in various relational databases. XQuery makes it easy to merge Web services and relational data together."

"After looking into the XQuery standard in more detail, we decided to find a general Xquery solution for all databases – not a proprietary solution," adds Madhavan. "Gevity chose DataDirect XQuery for several reasons:

- DataDirect adheres completely to the XQuery and XQJ specifications – unlike many other solutions we evaluated. This was critical for Gevity as it ensures Gevity's developers will have consistent, quality XQuery support and once they learn XQuery they can invest their time in writing code more productively – not figuring out the peculiarities of a proprietary implementation.
- DataDirect XQuery lives in the middle tier - along with the application. This is another main advantage for Gevity. It operates independent of the database. Because DataDirect XQuery allows us to leave the data access code in the middle tier, and not tied to a specific database, our application is insulated from any changes in the back end.
- The XQuery scripting language and DataDirect XQuery™ are easy-to-use, allowing developers to maximize productivity and reduce coding requirements. DataDirect XQuery's interface to Java™ is very similar to JDBC™ and integrates easily into Gevity's existing Java frameworks. This interface is also based on a standard, the XQuery for Java API (XQJ). The developers were able to be productive with it right away since it is so similar to JDBC.
- Since XQuery is a new language, we were looking for ways to help our developers with the learning curve – so not to jeopardize the project timeline. We were pleased to learn that the <oXygen/>® XML Editor for Eclipse (DataDirect XQuery Edition) integrates with DataDirect XQuery. Having an XML tool allowed our developers to test and make sure their XQueries were valid and correct before integrating them into the application.

DataDirect XQuery allowed us to deliver our project within the timeline and under budget, even though it required us to use XQuery – a new query language.

Madhavan Rangarajan,
Java Architect, Gevity

Rangarajan adds, "Another crucial part of the success of this project was DataDirect's support - first class during evaluation and implementation. The DataDirect technical support staff provided us with quick turnarounds for help with XQuery and XQJ, performance tips for tuning XQueries, identifying performance issues, and advice on the best way to code and maintain parts of the application."

DataDirect XQuery enabled Gevity to integrate Web services from multiple partners, XML documents, and relational data into the new Gevity Pricing Engine. Through DataDirect XQuery, Gevity can quickly furnish pricing proposals to client prospects and customers.

About DataDirect Technologies

DataDirect Technologies is the software industry's only comprehensive provider of software for connecting the world's most critical business applications to data and services, running on any platform, using proven and emerging standards. Developers worldwide depend on DataDirect® products to connect their applications to an unparalleled range of data sources using standards-based interfaces such as ODBC, JDBC and ADO.NET, XQuery and SOAP. More than 300 leading independent software vendors and thousands of enterprises rely on DataDirect Technologies to simplify and streamline data connectivity for distributed systems and to reduce the complexity of mainframe integration. DataDirect Technologies is an operating company of Progress Software Corporation (Nasdaq: PRGS). For more information, visit www.datadirect.com.

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DataDirect Headquarters

14 Oak Park Drive, Bedford, MA 01730 • Ph: 919.461.4326 • Fax: 919.461.4529

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