



NUCLEUS
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GUIDEBOOK

PROGRESS OPENEDGE

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THE BOTTOM LINE

As CIOs continue to seek to do more with less, they must also take advantage of emerging technology areas such as cloud and mobile computing to support competitive advantage. In looking at the experience of Progress OpenEdge customers and partners, Nucleus found they could deliver application innovation at a faster pace and lower overall cost than competing development environments, accelerating time to value and increasing business flexibility.

THE SITUATION

The consumerization of IT has made business software more accessible and easy to build, but has also brought challenges, such as integrating various types of solutions, maintaining them, and ensuring that data is secure. Software vendors and their partners can benefit from new technologies such as the cloud and mobile access to extend existing solutions and deliver new ones, but they need to manage the overall time to value and cost to support those innovations.

From a business perspective, the economic downturn, uncertainty, and budget limitations have discouraged companies from investing in expensive IT and unpredictable IT projects. Consequently, software vendors and their partners face new pressures; faster time to market and just-in-time delivery are expected, but IT budgets are lower. Companies are opting for outsourcing and third party integrators for software deployment, integration, and maintenance.

To address these challenges, Progress provides OpenEdge, a standards-based integrated development architecture that is used to build, run, and manage business applications. More than 5,000 OpenEdge applications are deployed at 120,000 sites and generate \$5 billion annual revenue for 1,400 Progress partners, who are independent software vendors (ISVs). In addition, there are more than 3,000 Progress direct customers who have written and utilize OpenEdge applications to support their day-to-day business. With the objective of facilitating the development of solutions by partners and direct customers in a cost-effective manner, OpenEdge provides capabilities including:

- Integration support at multiple layers. Application integration can be performed at the data level and also at the application level, thus providing the tools to build a service-oriented architecture (SOA) that enables multiple applications to be deployed and integrated across departments, geographical locations, and platforms (both operating systems and databases).
- An intuitive business language. OpenEdge's Advanced Business Language (ABL), which uses an English-like syntax to make code writing easier, can be used with other

programming technologies, and allows for access to most database types without requiring knowledge of their architecture.

- Integrated business process management. Programmers can include business logic when developing applications, automate workflows, and bring more transparency to estimates of business process performance – while writing fewer lines of code due to the rich language semantics, including a close coupling between application logic and interaction with the database.
- Robust and easy-to-use tools for application management.
- Support for cloud delivery with OpenEdge 11, which offers multi-tenancy at the database, application, and infrastructure levels. The Progress Arcade cloud application development platform enables Progress customers and partners to test, demonstrate, and deploy cloud applications.

To understand the benefits and best practices to maximize value from the capabilities of OpenEdge, Nucleus analysts looked at how customers and partners were using OpenEdge to support a range of applications including manufacturing, wholesale and distribution, point of sale, customer relationship management, business intelligence, business process management, accounting, and enterprise resource planning, with both cloud and on-premise delivery models.

WHY OPENEDGE

Nucleus found there were five major reasons why partners and customers chose OpenEdge over competing development environments such as IBM, Oracle, Microsoft, and Salesforce.com:

- ease and cost of development
- reduced time to delivery
- performance and stability
- breadth of delivery options
- the overall relationship with Progress.

EASE AND COST OF DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

The ability to develop and support applications with a fraction of the development resources that would be needed to build similar applications in most other environments was a primary motivation for many partners and customers choosing OpenEdge. In fact, one partner mentioned that one of the reasons for selecting Progress versus Oracle or Microsoft is that fact that its clients tend to have either no or limited IT personnel, and solutions created using Progress require little administration. Others said:

- *"We had a client who needed 5 people to maintain the Oracle database. They moved to Progress and only needed 2 people."*
- *"There is a learning curve, as for any technology, but once you learn it, it becomes really easy to use."*

REDUCED TIME TO DELIVERY AND TIME TO MARKET

Customers and partners also chose Progress because its Advanced Business Language, business process management capabilities, and reusability of code enabled them to more quickly deliver and update applications.

One Progress partner Nucleus interviewed mentioned that the company is engaged in extensive modernization for several business software vendors, including the redesign of applications and the move from character-based interfaces to Web-based versions using Ajax or HTML5. Progress allows these activities to be conducted quickly, and also helps companies to deploy the solutions more easily. A business software vendor who has used Progress for more than 25 years told Nucleus that *"It really takes a lot of the development time away and simplifies what you need to build an application quickly."*

Another aspect that helps Progress customers rapidly deliver applications is the ability to reuse code from old applications without making changes; users can simply recompile and go. Progress supports upward compatibility so developers know that code written more than 20 years ago will continue to run in the current release of OpenEdge. One customer told Nucleus, *"We have huge legacy code. OpenEdge supports older versions so we can use legacy code and new code together. Progress has been very good at it."*

PERFORMANCE AND STABILITY

The speed and reliability of the database was an important differentiator for OpenEdge in the eyes of many customers and partners. Users said:

- *"We selected OpenEdge because it was proven to allow high volumes of transactions to occur with minimum impact on the customers."*
- *"Progress is powerful and business focused, but that focus does not limit it on the technical side."*
- *"We have 25,000 call attempts each day and we never lost a single piece of data."*
- *"We've been using Progress for 25 years and we've only had to call them five times [for technical support]."*
- *"From our customer standpoint and our own support standpoint, reliability has been a major aspect. The database and the language have been incredibly reliable and we've had few issues that have caused many challenges."*

BREADTH OF DELIVERY OPTIONS

OpenEdge applications can be run on a variety of platforms, including Citrix MetaFrame, Windows XP, Windows 2003, Vista, HP-UX, IBM AIX, HP Itanium, Linux, Sun Solaris, and mobile devices, and OpenEdge also supports both cloud and on-premise delivery of applications, giving partners and customers greater freedom and less risk of platform lock-in.

One customer used Progress to build a private cloud to run all applications and said, *"It just worked. It's almost like electricity, we only notice when it's gone."* Another company had a system initially designed in COBOL, which it recently re-wrote completely on OpenEdge, and it is now working on a cloud version. One software vendor wanted to deliver its solution as a software-as-a-service (SaaS) delivery model and initially estimated a time to market of 2 to 3 years for the project, then found *"We spoke with Progress and they helped us realize that it was a business decision, not a technical decision. This was instrumental for the success of our initiative, which only took 3 months to finalize."*

VENDOR RELATIONSHIP, GUIDANCE, AND SERVICES

Progress's attention to partner and customer success, as well as its ability to deliver guidance in business strategy and roadmap planning in areas like cloud delivery and mobile application development, contributed to customers' and partners' positive feelings about their relationship with Progress. Users said:

- *"Compared to Microsoft, Progress made us feel that we were important enough to them for us to get the attention we needed."*
- *"We moved from IBM's AS400, and the guidance and support is much better with Progress. They are much more responsive than IBM. With [IBM] we felt lost in a maze every time we requested assistance with database issues."*

KEY BENEFIT AREAS

Nucleus found the features and capabilities of OpenEdge translated into four key benefits for Progress customers and partners: lower cost of ownership, increased staff productivity, faster time to value, and increased end user productivity.

LOWER COST OF OWNERSHIP

Nucleus found that most OpenEdge applications require fewer than one database administrator for ongoing support, and although customers found varying results based on their own specific experiences, all found their ongoing cost of ownership was less with OpenEdge than with other competing platforms supporting similar complexity:

- *"From the pure database standpoint, the cost for our customers to maintain a Progress-based system is a lot lower than an Oracle or even Microsoft SQL. You can get away with one person [for support] as opposed to several for an equivalent application in Oracle."*
- *"OpenEdge has fewer maintenance requirements and that factors in on the lower cost of ownership."*
- *"It easily takes less than half the resources to support than an Oracle application would require – we probably only need 10 to 15 percent the resources you would need with Oracle."*
- *"It's a much lower cost, especially from a maintenance and management point of view."*

Companies can reasonably expect to devote 70 percent fewer resources to support an OpenEdge-based application than one running on Oracle; some may see more significant savings.

Nucleus has also found that data storage costs can be significantly lower on an ongoing basis for OpenEdge applications, because unlike their traditional competitors, they can scale upward in size based on the amount of data they contain, rather than having a fixed minimum size.

INCREASED STAFF PRODUCTIVITY

OpenEdge enables developers to use business logic to create applications that can be changed according to the business rules in the operating environment. That capability, along with the ability to reuse code and develop applications with fewer lines of code, makes development staff more productive. Users said:

- *"It's incredibly productive to manipulate data with the platform. It's more complex today with devices, interface types, and integration needs but the bottom line is for a data-intensive application like ours it really takes a lot of the development time away."*
- *"We chose Progress because many of our customers don't have IT teams, and with OpenEdge, there's no need for a full-time DBA on staff."*

Developers and database administrators are also more productive on an ongoing basis because of the performance and stability of OpenEdge-based applications, as well as the parameter-based development architecture that enables business users to make changes and, in some cases, troubleshoot application problems without IT intervention.

Companies should consider both the one-time (during initial development) and ongoing (application maintenance and support) IT staff productivity gains driven by OpenEdge.

FASTER TIME TO VALUE

Increased productivity for developers, more stability and reliability built into the database itself, and the tight coupling of the database with the OpenEdge development environment simplifies application development and modification, enabling faster time to value:

- *"It simplifies what you need to build an application quickly."*
- *"The time to market is better with OpenEdge. For the data manipulation, time to market is much faster than trying to do something in Java. We have a team here with a product that has been rewritten in Java and one of the key things we noted is developer productivity dropped a lot – you have to think of less things as a developer than you have to interacting with a database with Java."*
- *"We can develop very quickly and easily and if we need to get out there with new capabilities we can do it fairly quickly."*

The ability to develop applications with fewer lines of code also enables developers to deliver applications faster.

INCREASED END-USER PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH MOBILE AND CLOUD ACCESS

Although many Progress partners and customers are relatively early in their deployment of mobile applications today, they already recognize the potential benefit of providing modernized application to end users by taking advantage of OpenEdge's HTML5 capabilities in areas such as retail, sales, field service, and health care. The scalability and performance capabilities of OpenEdge deliver greater end-user productivity today by accelerating application response times; these benefits are only amplified in the mobile device and cloud world.

BEST PRACTICES

Nucleus found that Progress partners and customers were most successful in maximizing returns from their OpenEdge investment when they followed a few best practices that were aligned with OpenEdge's design principles:

- Code reuse. One Progress partner found that its developers "*are seven times more productive because of OpenEdge code reusability alone.*" Taking advantage of the upwards compatibility of all older code versions to the current version Progress supports can accelerate initial time to market and application modification as well as enabling companies to identify new business opportunities with relatively low costs to entry.
- Self-service application maintenance. Because OpenEdge's business logic is parameter-based, developers can enable line-of-business staff to make changes without development support, reducing both the cost and time to support business process changes and issue resolution.
- Leverage vendor expertise and guidance. Both Progress partners and customers cited the importance of dialogue with Progress; several said guidance from Progress had a significant impact on their bottom line.
- Look for mobile opportunities. Nucleus has found the potential productivity impact of providing mobile device access to applications like CRM to be significant, and that impact will likely grow as device-based enterprise application options grow. Both Progress partners and customers can take advantage of its capabilities in mobile to drive greater returns from their existing OpenEdge investments.
- Take advantage of cloud options. The ability to support both cloud and on-premise application delivery gives Progress partners and customers choice and the ability to take advantage of the economies of the cloud when it makes the most sense for their business. Given that Nucleus has found cloud applications deliver 1.7 times the ROI of traditional on-premise ones, companies should be considering the cloud as part of

their overall strategy to maximize value from technology (Nucleus Research *m108 - Cloud delivers 1.7 times more ROI*, September 2012).

CONCLUSION

Performance and stability are key areas for concern in the enterprise application marketplace moving forward, as the consumerization of IT has driven high expectations for system uptime and response times – and those expectations will only grow as more users adopt cloud-based and mobile applications. To respond to competitive threats and business challenges and not just technological changes, internal development teams need to be able to focus their resources and efforts on rapid time to value and increased flexibility. Companies can take advantage of the relatively low cost, performance, reliability, and cloud and mobile support of OpenEdge to continue to focus their resources on innovation and delivering more value to both internal and external customers.