THE RESOURCE NETWORK

FACILITATING INTERACTIONS

The Resource Network brings together people and organizations in creative ways to achieve improved individual and group results. The services provided by The Resource Network help organizations develop world-class business initiatives through innovative information sharing and delivery mechanisms. The company works with organizations and their internal and external customers to maximize value through simplified access and sharing of information—bringing together the capabilities of distinct individual organizations in order to realize mutual advantage.

A sampling of clients using The Resource Network products and services include Green Mountain Coffee Roasters in the commercial sector, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency in the government sector, and the Special Olympics International nonprofit in what The Resource Network terms the "third sector" including associations, non-governmental organizations, nonprofit, not-for-profit and various types of communities.

"We facilitate connections and interactions between companies, government, entrepreneurs, and nonprofits," explains Rick Rodgers, co-founder and managing director of The Resource Network. "We're focused on trying to achieve outcomes that benefit everyone involved—from the corporations and their consumers to communities and their citizens."

MORE THAN THE SUM OF PARTS

The genesis of The Resource Network lay in the government sector. State governors concerned with a proliferation of organizations to which states were providing resources proposed a "Hall of States" in Washington D.C. to co-locate offices in order to achieve economy and focus. Rodgers was tasked with devising and implementing a solution.

"The idea was to use technology and data connectivity for bringing people and resources together," he says. "Today we've moved from the states to the world, bringing very disparate resources together in a way that the combined result is catalytic and something more than just the sum of the parts."

The Resource Network system was conceived as a creative use of best-of-breed data resources. At the core of the system was a FileMaker relational database application used for communications and events management that contains more than 40,000 chronological events such as meetings and public events.

Standard Microsoft products would also be employed, such as the Office suite of products, Outlook for email and calendar functionality, and SQL Server to house a repository of information on every country in the world—500 global sales regions, 4,155 country sub-units and thousands of cities and communities.

CHALLENGE

Synergistically tie together diverse data from multiple best-of-breed applications including hosted or cloud-based applications

SOLUTION

Progress® DataDirect® OpenAccess™ for ODBC for Salesforce datasource

BENEFIT

The ability to offer clients dynamic combinations of data from richly diverse sources including on-premise and the service cloud

PROGRESS

In addition, the system would incorporate Salesforce.com SaaS offerings including a customer relationship management [CRM] application used in managing contacts, accounts, and opportunities.

The key to the unique value that The Resource Network hoped to provide, however, lay not in the parts but in the whole. "Our aim was to develop in FileMaker what we call 'synergy point' applications," Rodgers said. "These would connect information from all of these sources, including synchronization with Outlook email and pushing information to the Outlook calendar."

Data connectivity would be the critical element of this synergy. It also presented the greatest challenge to making the system a reality.

BRINGING THE PIECES TOGETHER

Connecting data to the Salesforce.com service cloud on the front-end posed a challenge. It was unclear what solution, if any, could pull data from a Web service and transform it into data that could then communicate with ODBC-compliant applications such as FileMaker.

"We met with Salesforce.com in an attempt to figure out a solution, and Progress DataDirect OpenAccess *for* ODBC for Salesforce datasource came up," Rodgers recalls. "I'd had past experience with Progress® DataDirect® while developing sales information systems some years ago and was aware of the company's excellent track record and ability to connect disparate data-driven systems."

The DataDirect OpenAccess *for* ODBC for Salesforce datasource enables any ODBC-compliant application to access data sources at Salesforce.com in real time using SQL as the language. It is built using the same technology many software vendors use to implement custom ODBC, JDBC, OLE DB, and ADO.NET connectivity to their application data.

The Resource Network partnered with a technology consulting firm—Corporate Network Services [CNS]—to work with Progress DataDirect, Salesforce.com, and FileMaker in getting all the pieces working together.

"We had to exercise a great deal of creativity," recalls Wayman Ka, Director of Application Development at CNS. "The DataDirect support team worked with me so closely I was on a first-name basis with many of their members."

Rodgers also emphasizes this aspect of the company's growth since he'd worked with it in the past. "The people behind the technology are a very important factor," he says, "and the support team at DataDirect has grown right along with their technology."

CONNECTING THE WORLD

With 11,200 companies, 12,300 contacts from 205 countries, and 800 opportunities in Salesforce.com, The Resource Network can today use its FileMaker point applications to grid that information with geocentric information contained in its SQL Server repository as well as with the information, communication, and events management capabilities within FileMaker itself, to provide clients with a rich multidimensional perspective.

"ODBC data connectivity is what allows our system to achieve its synergistic dynamics, and DataDirect OpenAccess *for* ODBC for Salesforce Data Source provided us with the ODBC link from Salesforce.com into our FileMaker repository that put the final piece into place to make it all work together," Rodgers says in summation. "DataDirect is an excellent resource for connectivity. We definitely plan to continue relying on them for anything from a technical standpoint that can help The Resource Network in connecting the world."

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Rick Rodgers
Co-Founder and Managing
Director
The Resource Network

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