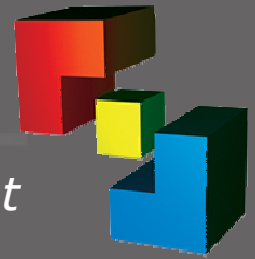


Case Study

Ernst & Young LLP



Microsoft .NET Application Development



ERNST & YOUNG

Project Vitals

Industry: Financial Services

Customer Profile: Ernst & Young is one of the five largest accounting firms in the U.S., with more than 103,000 employees in 670 locations in 140 countries globally. The firm's total revenue was \$1.3 billion in 2003.

Business Situation: E&Y's corporate network, accessed through EYOnline.com, had too many external domains for its global users and required a way to consolidate those external domains into one internal domain housed in Lyndhurst, N.J., where the company's Web site also resides. Without this synchronization, the company had no effective way to guarantee that users outside the system were receiving their information in due time.

Solution: .NET provided a way to synchronize E&Y's external domains with its internal one, by consolidating all domains into a single internal one. The system allows for clients to receive email alerts on an hourly, daily, weekly or monthly basis, depending on their needs, about the financial services provided by E&Y.

Award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner **The Henson Group, Inc. (THG)** managed a major migration initiative for Ernst & Young LLP (E&Y), the Big Four accounting firm, to move its network onto the Microsoft .NET platform. The project consolidated external domains into a single internal domain housed in Lyndhurst, New Jersey, where the company's Web site, EYOnline.com, is also located. THG also created a synchronization engine leveraging the power of Microsoft's .NET Framework to consolidate E&Y's external domain accounts and its internal domain accounts.

BUSINESS SITUATION

E&Y provides corporate partners with an enormous amount of financial industry information via its EYOnline.com web site. Subscribers can sign up to receive personalized emails on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis. Any employee of E&Y, as well as any employee of E&Y's partners, can log onto the Web site to receive this information. This user base represents a formidable community of between approximately 150,000 and 200,000.

Enhancing the site's functionality and achieving better synchronization of domains is key to the core functionality of the site. When E&Y was in the process of replacing servers and updating its Windows system, Microsoft recommended the use the .NET platform to deliver more benefits to E&Y's clientele than would its existing Java platform. E&Y made the project a primary focus of IT operations, hiring more than 30 developers—mostly independent contractors—to implement a .NET-based system. As THG had worked successfully on other comparable projects leveraging the .NET platform, Microsoft recommended THG to the client, which interviewed the developers on its own, and ultimately hired THG.

SOLUTION

E&Y needed one external domain into which all of its users could log on and access information. Part of Microsoft's rationale for developing .NET was to build a framework allowing for easier Web site construction and usability. The platform has its own coding language, C#, which allows programmers to complete their work in fewer lines of code than in a non-.NET platform. The framework also disposes of unnecessary lines of code on its own, rather than requiring programmers to nullify code themselves. .NET is also very easy to update once installed.

While the installation of the .NET platform required a total overhaul of E&Y's existing servers and outdated Windows programs, such an overhaul was in the works beforehand. Therefore, Microsoft trained the staff on how to use the new system; developers from this project will also remain on hand at the firm to help with future updates.

E&Y's clients need access to the site so they can receive up-to-the-minute information about their particular industries, as well as to be in contact with financial advisers. Because the information can be personalized and received on any time schedule the client chooses, the client can receive current information on a particular project or industry at any given time.



With the system of email alerts installed into this .NET-based system, E&Y clients can choose to receive this information on an hourly, daily, weekly or monthly basis as their needs require, via email. The email alerts are coordinated using a new version of the Microsoft SQL Server. This is a new product from Microsoft that will allow E&Y clients to customize the email alert system to meet their needs.

THG was hired to update E&Y's Web site, in part, because of a strong endorsement from Microsoft. However, E&Y also put THG developers through a rigorous interview process prior to hiring the firm. THG then began the process of synchronizing all of EYOnline's external domains into one internal domain located in the same physical space as E&Y's company Web site, a process necessary for E&Y to better provide its global clientele with customized industry info and even to alert clients to particularly important news via an email alert system.

And, THG's expert developers moved the entire EYOnline site to the Microsoft .NET platform because it needed the structure of a Microsoft SQL Server to build up the email alert system.

RESULTS

The Microsoft.NET platform and the use of the Microsoft SQL Server to create email alerts now makes E&Y's internal Web site the focal point for information about the firm and the various industries it represents for its global clients. Availability of information is the core functionality of the firm's internal Web site, as with any company Web site that provides its users subscription-based access to information pertinent to a particular industry or account.

The synchronization process meant that, in essence, a middleman was removed from the information-seeking process for global users. These users can now log directly on to a centralized system and receive information at any pace they desire. Clearly, the system increases efficiency and productivity for these users.

A team of more than 30 developers has overseen the project since its inception and many of those remained on hand at E&Y following the project's launch to manage the updating process.

THG's relationship with E&Y was also extended, with THG providing developers to aid in the updating process.

With the help of THG, Ernst & Young now gains a level of sophistication on its EYOnline.com Web site that elevates it above its Big Four competition, as it can now provide its clients with personalized information via one internal domain.

THG, by consolidating EYOnline.com's global clients into one server and moving the site to the Microsoft.NET platform, has given the accounting firm a substantial competitive and financial advantage over its competition.

About The Henson Group



Founded: June, 2000

Headquarters: New York City

Consultants: 37 (including both full-time and part-time professionals)

Partners: MS, HP, IBM, Cisco, Avicode, Dell, EMC, eXc Software, K2.net, Netscaler, Network Engines

Certifications: Microsoft Gold Certified and Cisco Certified

Official Microsoft Competencies:
Advanced Infrastructure Solutions
Information Worker Solutions
Integrated E-Business Solutions
Learning Solutions
Networking Infrastructure Solutions

History: Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development teams in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services

Consultants: All MS Certified, most former Microsoft engineers, and each have a minimum of three years of vertical-specific experience

Annual Client-Retention Rate: (2000 through 2004) 98%

Annual Client-base Growth: (2000 through 2004) 50%

Company Description: THG is an award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner specializing in deploying Microsoft technologies for U.S. and international companies across 20 industry categories.

Founded by former Microsoft employees from the development groups in Redmond and Microsoft Consulting Services, THG offers clients direct access to Microsoft's product groups and technical information often not publicly available.

THG's competencies include .NET application development, infrastructure deployments, Line-Of-Business solutions, security, product training, and strategic consulting.

Delivering projects in a fraction of the time it takes competitors, THG's proprietary project management process and attention to detail consistently produces a 98% client-retention rate.

Everywhere clients need THG to be, the consultancy has operations, engineers, and partners located in countries around the world that are committed to the highest level of client satisfaction.

To learn more about THG, please visit www.HensonGroup.com. For more information on how THG can deploy this type of solution in your environment, please call 800.980.1130 or e-mail Info@HensonGroup.com.

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