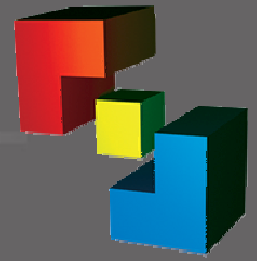


# Case Study Yellow Book USA, Inc.



## High-level Application Review Program

Award-winning Microsoft Gold Certified Partner **The Henson Group, Inc. (THG)** performed a High-Level Application Review to assist client Yellow Book USA in planning the integration of Click Forward, a provider of search engine marketing solutions it intends to acquire.

### BUSINESS SITUATION

Established in 1930, Yellow Book USA is the oldest and largest independent yellow pages publisher in the nation. In recent years, Yellow Book has made a number of strategic acquisitions and entered scores of new markets. (With its recent acquisition of TransWestern Publishing, Yellow Book USA now publishes approximately 900 directories in 46 states and the District of Columbia with a distribution of over 100 million.)

Click Forward uses leading-edge technologies and advertising expertise to allow its clients to offer highly profitable local search products to their advertisers. Because of the many synergies that exist between Yellow Book and Click Forward, Yellow Book has slated Click Forward to be its newest acquisition to accentuate its existing growth.

In order to validate this decision, Yellow Book engaged The Henson Group, Inc. to provide a comprehensive audit and evaluation of Click Forward's technical operations and applications to identify areas of concern and, if applicable, to propose viable recommendations for improvement.

### SOLUTION

Of the many strategic assessment services The Henson Group offers to its retail clients, High-level Application Reviews, such as the one requested by Yellow Book, represent one of the most sought-after offerings. THG currently operates a full-service Application Development division staffed by mostly former Microsoft employees with deep development experience.

The purpose of the High-Level Application Review that Yellow Book sought is for The Henson Group to deliver a comprehensive assessment of Yellow Book's applications to ascertain their depth of functionality, reliability, security, and scalability and to propose recommendations. In this instance, The Henson Group leveraged its specific experience and understanding of reverse engineering techniques to carefully analyze the major components that comprise Click Forward's infrastructure and application architecture, which includes an assortment of applications.

Click Forward's technology environment is comprised of SQL technologies and a mixture of newer .NET Framework technologies, such as C#, ASP.NET and Classic Active Server Pages, Visual Basic, and COM technologies. Click Forward has one major public-facing product that does not have any client-specific builds/revisions/customizations. On the opposite end of the spectrum the company has a number of purely private applications for use by a single client.

The company's systems have all been developed using Microsoft technologies from either the COM era or the .NET era. The highest levels of programming unit of these systems are combinations of applications (fat), web applications (thin), and web services. Any system that requires a database uses Microsoft SQL 2000, so obviously recommendations related to a possible migration to SQL 2005 were part of the agenda.

During this initial phase, a Microsoft Certified Consultant performed fact-finding to ascertain the following: Fitness for Purpose (Determine if each product in Yellow Book's environment is well-designed for its intended task), Disaster Recovery (Ascertain if each component and module be completely recompiled with

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### Project Vitals

**Industry:** Retail/Consumer

**Customer Profile:** Established in 1930, Yellow Book USA is the oldest and largest independent yellow pages publisher in the nation.

**Business Situation:** To help validate a decision for an acquisition, Yellow Book engaged The Henson Group to provide an audit and evaluation of Click Forward's technical operations and applications to identify areas of concern and, if applicable, to propose viable recommendations for improvement.

**Solution:** In this instance, The Henson Group leveraged its specific experience and understanding of reverse engineering techniques to carefully analyze the major components that comprise Click Forward's infrastructure and application architecture, which includes an assortment of applications.



appropriate flags), UML Diagram (For class, component –[including language], deployment, database), Scalability (Determine each product's ability to scale in an n-tier environment), Best Practices (Relative to time-period and technology), Fitness for Upgrade (Ability to port legacy technology forward to 'evolved' platform, In this case, to .NET 2.0.), Delineation of code ownership (For private applications, some of the code is owned by clients. It must be established that customer-owned did not become part of general modules used by public products.), and Licensing Compliance (Determine if the company's software is properly licensed).

As The Henson group places a premium on producing compelling and well-conceived audits, THG Principal Consultant James Casas worked closely with Click Forward to focus on evaluating and analyzing the most crucial and common elements of the client's application suite. This produced a solid overall picture of how Click Forward develops applications.

## RESULTS

Based on THG's review, it was determined that the overall design and architecture of Click Forward's systems offer an impressive range of functionality. Click Forward effectively demonstrated that each application that exists in its suite accomplishes its intended purpose. Based on the observations of THG Principal Consultant James Casas, as well as the input from knowledgeable internal Click Forward sources, THG considers that Click Forward has a tightly integrated, mature, fully-tested suite of applications that has successfully met customer needs throughout its many years of business.

It was observed that Click Forward also puts its customer first and listens to their needs and is willing to make enhancements to these applications where applicable to better the business. This flexibility and above-average grasp of new technologies, such as .NET, along with intelligent decisions made in its operations, make Click Forward a valuable asset.

But with every organization, there are always areas for improvement. THG strongly recommended Click Forward rebuild its classic ASP sites using Windows 2003 RC2, IIS 6, and .NET Framework 2.0 to take advantage of the benefits these technologies offer.

THG also advised that all SQL Server 2000 databases should also be moved to SQL Server 2005, which is work that has been already started.

Two of Click Forward's largest applications remain in Classic ASP and, there would be considerable amount of effort needed to achieve these migrations that would be in the timeframe of months and not weeks. However, the end result will fully align Click Forward with Microsoft's ongoing .NET Platform initiatives and benefits. In addition, Yellow Book must set aside time to sit with developers at Click Forward to develop documentation and conduct in-depth formal knowledge transfer sessions of all above mentioned applications in order to minimize any risk if any key developer resource leaves the company.

Finally, to strengthen Click Forward's infrastructure and the grasp it possesses over its business processes, it is recommended to review and include the additional technologies as mentioned above in any new development projects.

At the conclusion of the engagement, Yellow Book executives expressed their satisfaction with the findings of the outcome of technical operational report as it made them aware of a few issues and they will be amending their acquisition of Click Forward to include several take-aways, such as, addressing steps for scalability issues, obtaining a copy of all Click Forward source code, mandating full documentation of business processes and code, etc.

Click Forward is also actively engaged in reviewing some of SQL Server 2005's new feature set to see where new features will improve on its database structure and implementation. Again, this is a key indication that Click Forward has aligned with Microsoft's .NET Platform and newest database product.

## 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  
Business Intelligence  
Information Worker Solutions  
Integrated E-Business Solutions  
Learning Solutions  
Networking Infrastructure Solutions  
Security 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](http://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](mailto:Info@HensonGroup.com).**