

EXPERTPLAN, INC.

Revolutionizes Development with Groovy and Grails

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SPRINGSOURCE RESULTS

Groovy and Grails deliver the following business results to ExpertPlan:

- Reduced Development Time – cut by at least 60%
- Focus on Business Objectives
- Rapid Developer Ramp Up – 2 weeks vs. 3-6 months on the old
- Cost Savings on Resources & Reduced Risk
- More New Innovative Applications & Competitive Edge

TESTIMONIAL

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“Now we have SpringSource, one company to deal with for everything we want to have in the future – a simplified infrastructure, a more agile development methodology, a cloud, a virtualized infrastructure.”

“We are a small business competing against the big guys and we are looking for any advantage we can get. We believe Groovy and Grails will enable us to completely rebuild our site and our software to stay competitive.”

ExpertPlan, Inc.

ExpertPlan, headquartered near Princeton, New Jersey, is a technology innovator in the area of retirement program administration. The company is a leader in the defined contribution market, providing private-labeled retirement solutions for thousands of companies and organizations with billions of dollars in retirement assets.

Challenge

ExpertPlan’s web application, written in Java 10 years ago, is still in use today. It is a seven layer architecture that consists of over 1.5 million lines of code. The complexity of the system limited the ability of ExpertPlan’s technology team to develop new functionality quickly.

“When we took on a project, the prevailing thinking was that we couldn’t do it,” explains Michael Rizzo, Chief Technology Officer at ExpertPlan. “It was too complicated, our system was too bloated, it was going to take forever to figure this out.”

“When you have as much JSP code as we have, you don’t want to touch it because something may go wrong,” adds Bill Shea, Vice President of Software Engineering.

Over the last few years, Rizzo hired six Java developers, from junior all the way to senior lead developers, and none of them were able to become productive on ExpertPlan’s system in less than three months. “The system was complicated, and our documentation was weak,” Rizzo notes. The company decided to overhaul its development process.

Solution

ExpertPlan discovered that Groovy and Grails could solve all the challenges. Bill Shea developed ExpertPlan’s first application in Groovy and Grails to automate reporting, and it was a big win for the technology team.

Groovy is a dynamic language for the Java Virtual Machine that offers a flexible Java-like syntax that developers can learn in a matter of hours. Grails is an advanced and innovative Web application framework based on Groovy, and built on proven open source technologies such as Spring. Both Groovy and Grails are backed by SpringSource, the leader in Java application infrastructure and management.

“We are in the beginning of a revolution in our world with Groovy and Grails,” says Shea. “Now, we are taking other manual processes and automating them in Grails. We have proven that this is the way we want to do the rest of our website.”

"We want to take our antiquated web application and move it into Groovy and Grails, and simplify our application development significantly," Rizzo adds. "Now we have SpringSource, one company to deal with for everything we want to have in the future – a simplified infrastructure, a more agile development methodology, a cloud, a virtualized infrastructure. This is very compelling for me and for our CEO. I have one point of contact and one technology stack to deal with. It is very comforting from a management standpoint."

Benefits

GROOVY AND GRAILS DELIVER THE FOLLOWING BUSINESS RESULTS TO EXPERTPLAN:

Reduced Development Time

"Groovy and Grails cut as much as two-thirds off the development process," reports Shea. "I built the reporting application in 3 weeks, and that included learning Groovy and Grails. The estimate to complete the project on the old platform was at least 3 months."

Focus on Business Objectives

"Groovy and Grails has given us the ability to focus on the fundamental requirements of the business and not spend so many man-hours on the infrastructure layer," Shea explains.

"The bottom line is that a developer is more valuable to me if that person is working on a business function rather than figuring out how to write infrastructure code," adds Rizzo. "I want my developers working on projects that make us money."

More New Innovative Applications

Groovy and Grails give the ExpertPlan team freedom to innovate new applications and automate manual functions.

"The reporting application built on Grails is a big win for our company," says Rizzo. "We have saved 12-15 IT man hours a week spent answering ad hoc requests. Without Groovy and Grails we wouldn't have built the reporting application, because the estimate to get this done was 3 months. Groovy and Grails was an enabler that allowed us to take on the project."

Reduced Risk

With Groovy and Grails, Rizzo allows his developers to try more creative approaches because the risk is minimal. If something doesn't work out, they have only lost a day, as opposed to losing 3+ weeks on the old platform.

Improved Management Visibility

"I get to see results almost immediately in Groovy and Grails," Rizzo says. "I know my team is on the right track. As a manager, that is reassuring."

Cost Savings on Resources

"Groovy and Grails will allow me to keep my IT manpower static while the rest of the company grows," Rizzo states. "Our old platform requires two or three times the amount of work necessary to get simple tasks done. So as we simplify our architecture with Groovy and Grails, we will be able to address more projects in a shorter amount of time, and not have to double the size of the IT

organization, and spend millions of dollars. We can do it with our current staff because of the productivity gains from Groovy and Grails."

Rapid Developer Ramp Up

According to Shea, "a new developer can become productive on Groovy and Grails in just 2 weeks, compared to 3-6 months to become productive on the old platform."

Competitive Edge

"We are a small business competing against the big guys and we are looking for any advantage we can get," Rizzo concludes. "We believe Groovy and Grails will enable us to completely rebuild our site and our software to stay competitive."

About SpringSource

SpringSource, a division of VMware, Inc., (NYSE: VMW) and the leader in Java application infrastructure and management, provides a complete suite of software products that accelerate the entire build, run, manage enterprise Java application lifecycle.

SpringSource employs the open source leaders who created and drive innovation for Spring, the de facto standard programming model for enterprise Java applications. SpringSource also employs the Java and Web thought leaders within the Apache Tomcat, Apache HTTP Server, Hyperic, Groovy and Grails open source communities. Nearly half of the Global 2000, including many of the world's leading retail, financial services, manufacturing, healthcare, technology and public sector clients are SpringSource customers. For more information visit: www.springsource.com.



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