Bridge360™

TAILOR-MADE FOR A CUSTOM FIT

Our client, an international leader in fashion, fragrances, and home décor, relies heavily on the latest technology and scalable platforms to stay competitive and create an immersive online shopping experience. When this renowned luxury and lifestyle retailer found their e-commerce application behind the times, we helped them make it current and cutting edge in time for their spring fashion launch.

The Challenge
To deliver the best possible customer experiences through their online store, the client needed a more up-to-date foundation for their business critical applications. The most important application was a robust content management workflow system that managed the flow of product descriptions / specifications, and production samples from designer to merchandiser to photographer, to the web-content administrator, and every quality review point in between.

The existing application was difficult to maintain and in some cases prone to human error and delays. Some of these bottlenecks could be attributed to inefficient data management processes such as determining the categorization of products or even to a simple process of getting the correct packing box dimensions in order to send samples to the merchandiser: the measurements were calculated in one application and manually entered into another. As the number of products available online grew exponentially, the process delayed shipments and resulted in a higher percentage of errors. Technologically the workflow application was outdated, required configuration management on each PC for updates, and had limited data sharing and synchronicity. The user interface was cumbersome and did not represent the actual flow of the content building process.

Client

LUXURY/ LIFESTYLE RETAILER

Category

TEST AUTOMATION

THE GOAL:

A TAILORED, FLEXIBLE FIT FOR A FAST-PACED BUSINESS
The overarching goal was to create a web-based content workflow application to increase productivity, make the content workflow process more efficient and maintainable, and scale to provide accessibility to external users without compromising the client's IT SOX compliance or impact its IT operations.

TOP 5 GOALS

1. Move to Web-Based Platform
2. Augment Staff
3. Create Continuous Build Environment
4. Design Workflow Management Application
5. Meet Deadline

Bridge360 worked with the client to:
- Move the application to an Internet-based platform to significantly reduce the configuration management and improve the integrity of the application
- Provide a select team of experts to augment the client's technical staff
- Create a continuous build environment that would complement the client's Agile lifecycle
- Design a workflow management application that matched the reality of the client's actual workflow process
- Meet a tight deadline in order to roll out the application in time for the new fashion season

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THE PROCESS:

SIMPLIFY AND BUILD TO SCALE

Step 1: Using SilverLight, Bridge360 created a new web-based workflow management application. The new application allows items to be grouped into categories straight off the production line   (as opposed to manually in the old system), and automates the entry of box dimensions and weight through integration with the package-metering scanner. For every thousand packages, the old application took from two to three minutes; now it takes only a few seconds. Given the sheer volume of the client's inventory, the savings for this process alone is hundreds of hours each season.

Step 2: Bridge360 created an RIA compatible web service allowing the use of the existing data classes (invoking the required validation), maintaining the data integrity of the application, and triggering the bulk loading of data with validation routines.

Step 3: Bridge360 helped to provide a continuous build environment for the client. While SilverLight lends itself very well to the Agile concept of a continuous demo environment and frequent deliveries, it also requires more testing and test automation and has limited test efficiencies and integration capabilities - even within the MS family of application development tools. Bridge360 used MOQ and Team City to enable comprehensive unit testing for the project, and with these tools, scripts and reusability features, the test team was able to adapt to the continuous build process.

After

Time to Process

Before

THE RESULTS:

STREAMLINED AND READY FOR BUSINESS

The new, web-based application provides an improved user interface and requires less training. It enables a workflow that matches the "reality" of the actual business process. In addition, the merchandisers now have more accurate and frequent communication with the photographers and content writers, who are integral to making a product retail-ready for its online store. The spring season launched with success.

Bridge360 pushed technology beyond its documented capabilities for a tailor-fit solution, saving the client hundreds of work hours each fashion season and allowing them to stay at the cutting edge of their market. Bridge360 architects all future enhancements to the technology and has been retained by the client for several new projects.

100s
Of Work Hours Saved
EVERY SEASON