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Case Study: How ExactTarget Accelerates Deployment and Fosters Innovation with Stackato®

Tasked with crafting a vision for, and then implementing the Interactive Marketing Hub™, ExactTarget development leadership faced a challenge: How could ExactTarget innovate faster to outpace the market, and more importantly, keep pace with the speed of its own creativity?

ExactTarget®

After due diligence evaluation, ExactTarget chose Stackato® enterprise private Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) technology from ActiveState. ExactTarget deployed Stackato in production, where it has helped ExactTarget accelerate application deployment, foster experimentation, and most importantly, innovate.

Innovating at the Speed of Orange: But How to Go Faster?

Based in Indianapolis, Indiana, ExactTarget is the global leader in marketing Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions, and its commitment to innovation drives the company. That commitment, combined with ExactTarget's entrepreneurial spirit and unwavering focus on client success, forms the basis of its "Orange Culture." The Interactive Marketing Hub is ExactTarget's flagship offering: The groundbreaking service provides true cross-channel digital marketing across email, web, and social media.

> *Stackato offered a robust, self-service, enterprise-grade, commercially-supported private PaaS solution that was compatible with Cloud Foundry APIs.*

"ExactTarget delivers best-in-class marketing software," notes ExactTarget principal product manager Dale McCrory. "We're always looking for the next big thing to help our clients achieve digital marketing success, so we build continuous innovation into our workflow."

The Interactive Marketing Hub was envisioned as an interactive cloud operating system for delivering and integrating digital marketing applications with customers. Creating a central hub architecture is one thing, populating (and repopulating) it with marketing applications is another. Building, testing, staging, and deploying a wide array of software applications—applications that had to meet stringent quality control and customer requirements—were key to the Interactive Marketing Hub's success. But multiple URLs, programming language differences, and time pressures complicated timely delivery.

"We needed to spin up VMs, provision resources, and configure environments before we could even test one idea," recalls McCrory. "It could take weeks. We wanted to deliver the most innovative products to market, but there were barriers to testing ideas and fleshing them out."

The Need? Flexible, Polyglot Private PaaS. But DIY or Buy?

Given the organization's requirements for polyglot development and rapid application deployment, McCrory knew the Hub cloud needed a solid PaaS middleware foundation. He and his team first considered the open-source Cloud Foundry platform, but recognized that Cloud Foundry deployment would require significant investment and time. McCrory had to decide if architecting, developing, and supporting its own private cloud middleware was a business ExactTarget really wanted to be in.

For McCrory, Stackato enterprise private PaaS technology from ActiveState offered a robust, self-service, enterprise-grade, commercially-supported private PaaS solution that was compatible with Cloud Foundry APIs.

"I like the Cloud Foundry project and vision," explains McCrory.

> *"Stackato has enabled a level of empowerment for our developers that previously was not possible. Instead of quickly developing apps and then running into the brick wall of IT backlogs, developers can literally run with their apps straight to the cloud. Easily, safely, and quickly."*
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> —Dale McCrory, Principal Product Manager, ExactTarget

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"It was an attractive option, but ultimately, Stackato's enterprise solution offered us a faster path...out-of-the-box PaaS technology that just worked."

Stackato in Production: Fast Deployment, Better Apps, Greater Innovation

Before Stackato, cloud application deployment to the Hub was a scheduled two-week process: Developers would create applications, hand them off to IT, and wait, hopeful that their applications would function properly. Missing the deployment window meant waiting another two weeks to try another application deployment.

McCrory and team initially trialed Stackato on two clusters, each with four VMs. The Stackato operational model empowered ExactTarget developers, who could now deploy applications to production without having to involve IT management. The deployment workflow change had an immediate impact: Application deployment became dynamic, and no longer subject to the vagaries of IT calendars. And Stackato's polyglot capabilities meant ExactTarget developers could code in the languages that were right for their business (and not in one imposed upon them by infrastructure software constraints).

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The Stackato development environment (installed on developer client machines) mirrors production, so engineers now knew whether an app would work in production before deployment. Prototyping capability is essential to ExactTarget's application

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—Dale McCrory, Principal Product Manager, ExactTarget

strategy: Accelerating deployment to such an extent means ExactTarget can test and deploy dynamically, with delivery progress visibility available to collaborating stakeholders. The result is more apps developed and deployed faster, easier application development collaboration, and better quality products and services.

The Future: MoreFasterBetter with Stackato

In a corporate culture built on entrepreneurial innovation, Stackato delivers for ExactTarget. McCrory is working with colleagues to roll out Stackato throughout ExactTarget. He aims to have all production applications running on Stackato by the end of 2013.

"The possibilities are endless," concludes McCrory. "Seeing how much we've been able to accomplish in such a short period of time is truly astonishing. I'm excited to see how we can further leverage Stackato to meet our goals and then exceed them."

About ActiveState

ActiveState empowers innovation from code to cloud smarter, safer, and faster. ActiveState's cutting-edge solutions give developers and enterprises the power and flexibility to develop in Java, Ruby, Python, Perl, Node.js, PHP, Tcl, and more. Stackato is ActiveState's groundbreaking cloud platform for creating a private platform as a service (PaaS), and is the cost-effective, secure, and portable way to develop and deploy apps to the cloud. ActiveState is proven for the enterprise: More than two million developers and 97% of Fortune-1000 companies use ActiveStateís end-to-end solutions to develop, distribute, and manage their software applications. Global customers like Cisco, CA, HP, Bank of America, Siemens, and Lockheed Martin look to ActiveState to save time, save money, minimize risk, ensure compliance, and reduce time to market.