

Small Business Case Study

Products Used: Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processor technology, Dual-Core Intel® Xeon® processor technology, Intel® Centrino® processor technology
Company Size: 1-25 employees

www.AtlanticWebfitters.ca

Portal Consulting and Project Management | Intranet and Extranet Solutions |
Corporate Hosting | Email Solutions | Custom Development

Doucet - Watts
& Davis
INTERIORS

D-L SPECIALTY VALVE &
CONTROLS LTD.

Living Stone Realty

Portals Powered By Intel Open Companies For Business

Summary

Small businesses often struggle with building and maintaining functional web sites. With an eye on increasing efficiency, automating business processes and improving communication, Atlantic Webfitters* helps companies leverage the communication power of the Internet with portal technology powered by Intel®.

Challenge

Having a presence on the Internet with a web site has become a necessity for doing business whether you are a Fortune 500 firm or a small realtor, design company or valve distributor. The challenge for the latter is implementing leading-edge technology without breaking the small business bank.

Gifford Watkins, founder and CEO of Atlantic Webfitters, knew small businesses needed access to technology that could improve communication and market visibility, but he realized these smaller companies couldn't afford the professional support needed to keep web sites dynamic. He also found that the price tags attached to many programs for inventory management, content management and CRM were cost prohibitive for many small firms.

"I knew there was an opportunity to develop a web-based modular software service for small businesses that would give them control to update and expand their web sites on the fly," says Watkins. Company CTO Mark Saunders adds that to be effective, business web sites need to move beyond being a business card that's handed out to prospects and clients, and become a full fledged conversation with those stakeholders.

Enter the business portal ... web-based software that combines the internal processing capabilities of content management software with office productivity software and a CRM system that is all accessible through a web interface. It also merges traditional Intranet and web site functionality to create a powerful marketing and employee communication tool.



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Atlantic Webfitters* created a software service whereby clients could pick the modules they needed to automate specific parts of their business. Since each module “plugs into” another, companies can add features easily.

The challenge for Atlantic Webfitters was ensuring this new portal service had the speed, power and scalability its growing client base would require. For this, Atlantic Webfitters turned to Intel®.

Solution

The top priority for Atlantic Webfitters was ensuring their web portal modules were easy to roll out by their clients without a lot of training or support. They also wanted to make sure clients could update their own sites without programming experience. Using an open source web application framework which was developed for creating, deploying and managing interactive web sites, Atlantic Webfitters was able to tap into a community of developers and leverage specific portal modules that would be useful to a growing base of potential clients.

Next was ensuring clients’ web sites were hosted on a powerful server base that could easily handle the peak demands. They chose custom-built servers featuring Intel server class motherboards and Quad-Core Intel Xeon® processor technology in a rack configuration.

“With the new quad core technology, we have been able to decrease our costs and increase redundancy,” Saunders said, adding the small profile of these servers allows them to run more servers in a smaller footprint within their collocation facility, which also saves money. In addition to the redundancy made possible by quad core technology, the collocation facility has full back up power and capacity in the event of a disaster. When running on generators in a power failure, Atlantic Webfitters appreciates energy efficiency and low heat generation of the Quad-Core Intel processors.

The speed with which pages load or refresh is a top priority for Saunders, who relies on his Quad-Core Intel

Xeon processor technology to make sure pages load in seconds, whether or not they contain large data files. In addition, customers need to be certain their pages will be available online when they need them so the reliability of Intel products, coupled with the redundancy built into Atlantic Webfitters’ network configuration, ensures customers always have access to their site when they need it.

The return on investment for customers of this service is significant, says Watkins. Not only do they save the cost of buying and maintaining a server, but they also access top line software such as SQL* database technology, intranet modules for office productivity and content management software for a small monthly fee. Additionally, they have eliminated the cost of paying programmers to make changes to their site, which can run upwards of \$5,000 a year for the programming alone to update a simple business site.

“We try to deploy technology that will give us the greatest return on our investment and we believe that quad core technology extends the life of the servers significantly,” says Saunders. “For us, choosing quad core technology was a no brainer. There was not a large cost difference but you got a lot better performance and expansion potential!”

“We go with Intel because that is the standard in the industry. Clients like to know we are running Intel because their portals need to run 24 hours a day,” adds Watkins.

Key Advantages

The advantages for Watkins’ customers are cost and performance. To get the same level of technology and software, many customers would be spending tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars and waiting days, weeks or months for programmers to make the changes they need.

“The reality in the SMB world is that businesses know they need content management systems but think they can’t afford it,” says Saunders. “With our model they can



afford it and are profiting from it." One client was originally quoted 15,000 dollars for a web site that they'd need to pay someone else to maintain. Instead, they implemented an Atlantic Webfitters* portal, which saved them programming costs and allowed their office staff to perform content updates such as new inventory lists. Watkins says the portal also helped the company break into the European marketplace because customers could access a professional site that had an up to date and dynamic inventory listing.

For Sale Turns To Sold

Bronx, NY realtor and broker John Buoninfante knew there had to be a better way of managing prospective buyers and his home listings. In New York City, realtors don't post their listings to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS) online system so house buyers have to contact multiple brokers to find the house they need.

When Buoninfante started Living Stone Realty*, he wanted to leverage technology to match prospective clients with current listings. By working with Atlantic Webfitters he built a customized portal that not only serves as his web site, but also collects a powerful database of prospective house buyers that tracks all home requirements including size, price, neighborhood and other key features.

Leveraging the combination of portal technology powered by Quad-Core Intel® Xeon® processor technology serving up data quickly, and the mobility of his Motion Computing* Tablet PC with Intel® Centrino® processor technology, Buoninfante believes he has a market advantage.

"When other agents go on a listing call they can tell the seller they have prospects for their home, but I can tap into my database of buyers and show them exactly how many people want their specific type of house," he says. "It also means that when I have a new listing, someone at the office can pull prospects for that home based on the criteria and start making appointment calls before I can even get back from my appointment."

Since the portal technology is web-based, Buoninfante can access his database from anywhere using his Tablet PC with Intel® Centrino® processor technology, or any computer with web access. This virtualized environment has allowed Buoninfante to close his office store front and work remotely.

"I can make calls to potential buyers from anywhere," he says, adding the investment has paid off. "The database is so powerful anyone can make prospect calls for me, and can see exactly when that prospect was last called. It gives my business a level of professionalism that separates me from other brokers."

Opening The Valve On Global Sales

When D.L.T. Specialty Valve & Controls Ltd.* (Specialty Valve) opened for business two years ago, they relied on manual processes for everything from preparing quotations to issuing invoices. Specialty Valve, which distributes engineered valves for the oil and gas industry, would cut and paste quotes on to pre-printed letterhead and create documents from scratch every time.

"When I started, everything was very archaic," recalls general manager John Manning. "As we started getting more orders, the manual process was too time consuming to continue without hampering growth."

Additionally, they needed a way to track customers, view their order history and a description of the products they bought. They also wanted to see the costs paid to the manufacturer for those valves to ensure margins were being maintained.

The web portal technology supplied by Atlantic Webfitters has allowed Specialty Valve to shelve scissors and paper, saving the company about 150 hours a week ... time that is now spent generating more business and sales. With a few mouse clicks they can turn initial quotes into a sales order, then a packing slip and finally an invoice. "We were spending most of our time

running around making photocopies when we could have been making sales. We can now email out all quotes and it looks so much more professional," says Manning.

The time up front to enter the data into the servers with Quad-Core Intel Xeon processor technology has paid off. "With a few clicks, we can look at everything related to that customer including pricing history, what has been ordered, and we are now working to integrate the past purchase price from the manufacturer so we can monitor margins."

The impression left on clients has been positive. "We look like a giant corporation but we only have a staff of five. International clients have come to our site and are impressed with how professional it is, and how quickly we can email them a professional quote as a PDF," says Manning. The portal is so easy to use, Manning can add functionality to the intranet or create new pages for the company's external web site without any programming experience.

Designing A Hot Business

Doucet-Watts & Davis Interiors Inc.* (DWD Interiors) has been creating beautiful spaces for Halifax residences since 1993. Clients of the firm can choose from any one of five different designers and a vast library of suppliers for fabrics, lighting, furnishings, wallpaper, flooring and more.

"We've carved out a niche in the middle and high end interior decorating and design market," says president and co-owner Jim Davis. He knew that having a web presence was an important marketing tool, but was frustrated after hiring and training staff to build the site, only to have the person leave and no one at the company with knowledge to make changes.

"I knew what I needed was care and control," recalls Davis, and he got it with Atlantic Webfitters. With the new DWD Interiors' portal from Atlantic Webfitters, hosted on servers with Quad-Core Intel Xeon processor technology, Davis can "add new modules on the fly and make an idea a reality instantly."

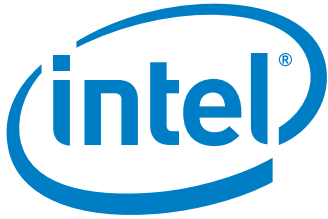
The portal not only provides a domain for DWD Interiors' web site, but also serves up a powerful password protected intranet with e-mail access, shared calendaring and a virtual showroom of suppliers that links designers to supplier sites to access DWD pricing online, as well as being able to see if inventory is in stock.

Since the site is web-based, DWD Interiors' designers can work on any desktop or notebook platform. One designer is using a MacBook* notebook with Intel® Core™ 2 Duo processor technology and can access the system and communicate with others at the firm with the same ease as another designer using a Lenovo* notebook with Intel processor technology.

Davis sees the cost advantages to hosting with Atlantic Webfitters. He saves significant dollars on the purchase of a server, and gets all the power he needs with Atlantic Webfitters hosting servers powered by Dual-Core Intel Xeon processor technology. He also gets the ability to add new features easily with a powerful content management system for 100 dollars per month.

"The cost is easy to justify. I have the care and control I need," he says, adding they have seamless communication with staff, installers can see their schedules online, and designers get easy access to the supplier library without needing to come into the office. "And, it all costs a lot less than my 650 dollars a month yellow page ad"

"I am so impressed with this technology that I want to market it. Big companies have this, small companies aren't supposed to have this but we do," says Davis, adding his company has definitely secured business as a result of web technology.



Future Uses

While Living Stone Realty*, D.L.T. Specialty Valve* and DWD* are running dramatically different businesses, all of these small businesses see the benefits realized by their companies leveraging Atlantic Webfitters* portal technology hosted on Intel®.

Buoninfante is working to patent the realtor portal as a first step in reselling the technology to other Bronx and Queens real estate agents and brokers.

Davis is looking to add a client workspace where designers and their clients can easily collaborate on a new design. Davis sees this as a real opportunity particularly when working with international clients designing vacation homes in Nova Scotia.

"The potential is wide open and I can morph it into anything I want," says Davis.

Specialty Valve is continuing to expand the new functionality of their intranet site and is looking to integrate the system into their accounting software. Work is also underway to add an inventory management system that will allow staff to retrieve valve information from a products database within two to three key strokes and instantly see price, designs and all the relevant data about that product.

For Atlantic Webfitters, the future is all about creating specialized portals for more vertical markets. Watkins sees an opportunity to take what they have learned by rolling out portals to existing clients and create targeted portals with plug-in modules that address the specific needs of each industry. With a growing client base, Watkins knows that having customers able to take control of their web sites and manage content independently will allow his business to continue to grow.



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