

Mobile-Enablement Ensures 7x24 Customer and Employee Systems Access

CM First Partners with an International Logistics Management Company to Web and Mobile-Enable Logistics and Warehousing Business Application



The Challenge

As an international logistics management company expanded to offer services to more companies and markets, it became clear that running their core application as a Windows-front-end, client-server AS/400 application would slow them down. The application itself wasn't the problem; instead, the challenge was setting up servers and a VPN in every new site. This approach didn't scale; it cost too much and took too long. Migrating to the web was the answer, but rewriting the application from scratch to web-enable it would take quite a while and introduce more risk.

The Solution

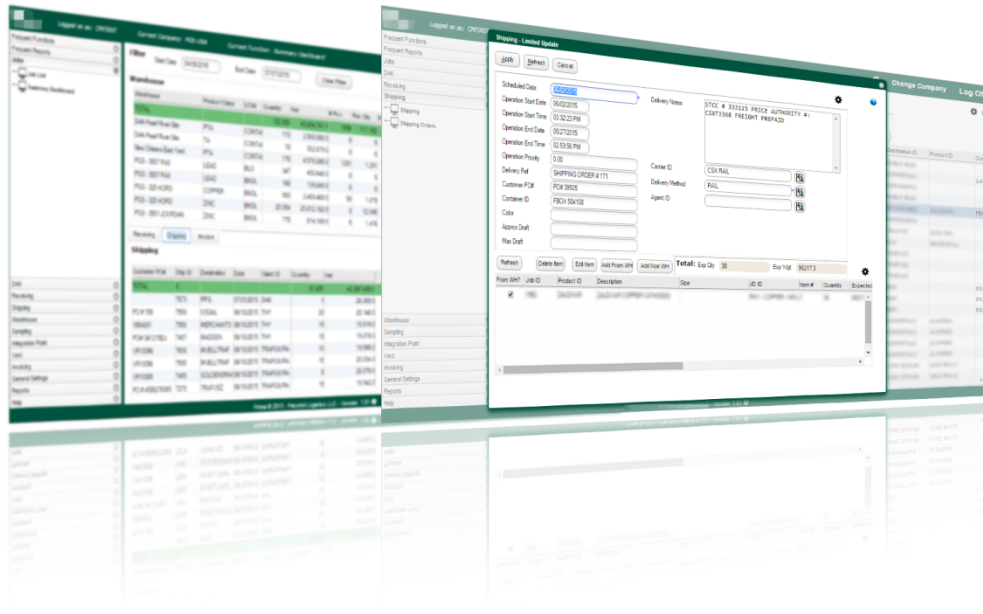
The company decided instead to look at reuse of the existing application. The solution they found that met their needs was CM WebClient and Sencha Touch. CM First partnered with Sencha to offer a robust, complete solution to transform CA Plex applications to support web and mobile. With only a week of training and good support from CM First, the company's business intelligence manager and his team were able to start web-enabling the application. In just four months, they had a working application in production. The manager noted that throughout the project, only 1-2 developers were needed from his team. CM First also helped out in seeing the project to completion. One key component of the web solution was deployment of a browser based business intelligence solution. The SAP Crystal Reports integration announced by CM First last year helped solve that issue.

The company began their modernization project with a modern HTML 5 web solution, but as more employees and customers wanted to use tablets and phones, they decided to offer a mobile version of the core business application. Clients also found the mobile app a differentiator in working with the company.

"One of our clients uses the mobile app to track their business. They've also integrated it into their SAP system and data can easily flow between their systems and ours," said the manager of the development team. "We handle their logistics. With the high supply chain volumes, having the mobile option integrated made us the right partner for them and provided the exact tool they need for their supply chain management and control."

The company became so successful that they needed to look at the challenge of supporting the increasing IT management challenge. Rather than scale up costly infrastructure and people to handle the load, the application was migrated to Amazon Web Services (AWS),

Amazon's cloud computing platform. To make the move, the team had to convert their AS/400 database to SQL Server, which took three months.

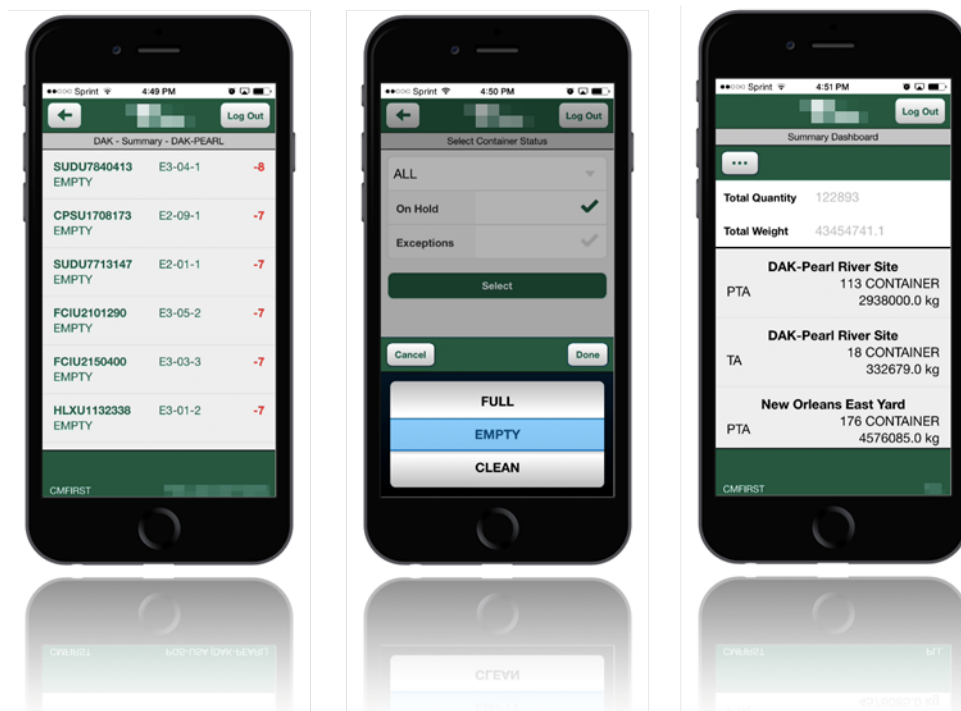


The Results

The short timeframe from project initiation to completion was a win for the small development team. After the first phase, the company knew they had selected the right partners for the project.

“Not only did this solution help us meet our goals to offer web, then mobile support,” said the business intelligence manager. “We also loved that secure deployment became a snap. We no longer had to install an application on users’ computers. We’d simply provide them with a user-id and password and send them the web link.”

Risk, cost and time were reduced by migrating the existing application instead of rewriting it. The development team could also use their existing skills to do the work and maintain the result. From the business perspective, the large benefits of this approach included a reduction in equipment costs. The company would also be able to handle a large volume of metals operations using a reduced traffic and control team.



“The application manages our warehousing operations by the use of forklift-mounted computers. With a CM Web Client solution, we proved the value initially with iPad tablets, then substituted with less costly tablet computers,” said the manager. “CM WebClient and Sencha was really the most cost-effective solution for moving our primary business application to the web and then to mobile.”

The move to AWS also provided key benefits. The company expected to save on servers and web connectivity; as the cost of AWS was so much lower than an in-house solution. They loved the much-improved performance and the fact that all the server maintenance was handled for them, as part of their contract.

As a company moves applications to the cloud, a key concern is safety of the data in such an open environment. Though AWS provides some security capabilities, the company found they needed to add safety and security features to their application to ensure the integrity of their systems.

CM First continues to work with this company on projects to enhance the capabilities of this critical business application.

About CM First

CM First is a global software and services company with focus on application modernization, custom development of enterprise applications that support high-performing, and agile development teams in three key areas: Application Modernization for IBM Environments, Custom Application Development Architected and Agile, Tools and Technology for Future Development.

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