



Microsoft .NET Framework 3.0 Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: PureNet

Web Site: www.PureNet.co.uk

Country or Region: United Kingdom

Industry: Hosting and application service providers

Partner: 7Global

Customer Profile

PureNet provides hosted software and services solutions for e-commerce.

Established in 2006, the company employs nine people at its York offices. Its customers include major high-street retail chains.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2005
- Technologies
 - Microsoft .NET Framework version 3.0

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Software Provider Successfully Moves into Hosted Solutions with Incubation Program

“The Microsoft SaaS Incubation Center Program gave us the confidence to overhaul our business model and start delivering SaaS. The advice and support we received was excellent.”

Dr. Paul Gibson, Managing Director, PureNet

PureNet provides e-commerce software and services to retailers. In 2007, it began investigating the possibility of moving its solution to a hosted offering and delivering software as a service (SaaS). Through the Microsoft® SaaS Incubation Center Program, the company was introduced to Microsoft Gold Certified Partner 7Global. PureNet worked closely with 7Global to overhaul its business model, and, in 2008, it sold its first SaaS solution to a major high-street retailer.

Business Needs

The margins in the United Kingdom retail sector are getting tighter all the time. Businesses are constantly looking for ways to reduce large outlays and make costs more predictable. At the same time, the opportunities afforded by the Internet mean that many organisations are investing in e-commerce solutions. All must strike a balance between investment and cost-saving.

PureNet is a software and services company that provides e-commerce solutions. Its Web POS 2.0 Framework, which runs on the

Microsoft .NET Framework version 3.0 and uses Microsoft SQL Server® 2005 database software, deals with everything a retailer needs in the online space, including order fulfilment, promotions, and back-end integration. Its customers include major high-street retailers. Until recently, the company sold its systems on a proprietary basis, so retailers would buy the software package and pay for services from PureNet to augment the system.

Dr. Paul Gibson, Managing Director of PureNet, saw an opportunity to change the way the company did business. He says: “We

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.net Framework

were hearing a lot about SaaS, and we were keen to explore what the model could do for our organisation. Many retailers are uneasy with the initial costs of deploying an e-commerce solution, and we wanted to find out if we could target those customers with SaaS, which removes the initial outlay and spreads costs over time."

Dr. Gibson and his team began looking for a partner that could guide PureNet through the implications of moving to a SaaS model. "We knew there was a huge opportunity for our business to deploy the model in the right way, but we also knew that there were pitfalls, so we needed to speak to a company with real experience in this area."

Solution

In 2007, PureNet entered the Microsoft SaaS Incubation Center Program, an initiative that helps independent software vendors (ISVs) adopt the SaaS delivery model. "We were very keen to be involved with a scheme backed by a company as respected as Microsoft," says Dr. Gibson.

The program connects ISVs with Microsoft hosting partners, so they can benefit from the expertise and services of established companies in the SaaS market. The team at Microsoft put PureNet in touch with 7Global, a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and one of the first managed hosting providers to participate in the Microsoft SaaS Incubation Center Program. Dr. Gibson says: "We had a series of business development and technical workshops with the team at 7Global, where they talked us through the SaaS approach."

"Our directors were quickly convinced that SaaS was the right model for PureNet. Once the decision was made, we arranged a Service Provider Licensing Agreement with Microsoft, and worked with 7Global to produce a SaaS

offering based on our existing software and services. The company provides all the advanced hosting services we need, including monitoring and backup, as well as network and bandwidth management. It takes the burden off our team, so that they can focus on our core business. And it meant we were up and running straight away."

Paul Doherty, Sales and Marketing Manager, 7Global, says: "We use the latest Microsoft technology to take care of all the hosting for PureNet, and we gave the team the tools and guidance they needed to create their SaaS product in the first instance."

The service PureNet developed is hosted at data centres that are equipped with the latest security features and environmental defences, and run by 7Global. Dr. Gibson says: "We host customer data in some of the safest storage facilities in the world. Instead of looking after the data themselves, our customers give the responsibility to PureNet and 7Global."

In late 2007, PureNet piloted the new SaaS product with a high-street retailer. Dr. Gibson says: "The retailer was pleased with the system, and we moved from pilot to live deployment early in 2008. The customer pays on a monthly basis, with no retainer or software development fees to pay up front."

Benefits

With support from Microsoft and 7Global, Dr. Gibson and his team successfully transformed PureNet into a SaaS provider. He says: "The Microsoft SaaS Incubation Center Program gave us the confidence to overhaul our business model and start delivering SaaS. The advice and support we received was excellent." PureNet is now more agile because it enjoys a constant stream of guaranteed revenue. And the

change to SaaS has already attracted plenty of interest: "We're in talks with three more high-street retailers. Customers are attracted by the low initial start-up costs, by the peace of mind they get from knowing their data is safe, and by the fact that they automatically receive the latest version of our software. We've taken up a market-leading position in the industry," says Dr. Gibson.

- PureNet receives guaranteed monthly income from customer subscriptions, allowing Dr. Gibson and his team to plan the company's finances more effectively.
- The company is attracting new, high-profile customers with its hosted solutions.
- Customer experience is improved because initial costs are significantly reduced, data is stored in secure units and software is always upgraded to the latest version.
- Dr. Gibson says: "We now have ongoing relationships with customers instead of a one-off transaction. We're seeing new business opportunities all the time."