ReaderLink employees can now keep track of time spent on projects more efficiently.

Customer Profile

ReaderLink is recognized as an innovator with an unmatched ability to service mass merchants, warehouse clubs, and drug/grocery accounts. With over $600 million in annual sales, ReaderLink provides books and services surrounding books to BJ's Warehouse Clubs, Kmart, Meijer, Rite Aid, Shopko, Stop and Shop, Target, Toys "R" Us, Walmart, and others. Additionally, ReaderLink supplies books and warehousing services for Wholesaler Source Interlinks customers including Albertsons, Kroger, Walgreens, Safeway, and many others. ReaderLink offers an array of supply chain services for books, such as warehousing, picking, and shipping to complex planogramming of each retailer's consumer book offering and full in-store merchandising services.

Business Requisites

ReaderLink approached Pearl Technology's development team to enhance and rewrite their Time Reporting System (TRS) web portal, reducing dependency and increasing flexibility. This customized portal is used by all employees to record and track time spent on specific projects. ReaderLink wanted to reduce mailing costs and record more detailed key performance indicators (KPIs). ReaderLink was in need of a more automated approach with a database that was fully relational and easy to access and enhance. They were looking for a stable platform to build additional business processes.

The Pearl Technology Solution

Pearl has a staff of Microsoft certified DBAs (MCITP), an IEEE (CSDP) certified software professionals, and multiple Microsoft certified software professionals (MCPD). This project did not lend itself to a simple one-man implementation team, but rather a small, well-crafted team that could quickly learn the business requirements, understand the business use cases, and architect a technical solution to meet the needs of the client. Pearl assisted throughout the entire software development lifecycle—from initial requirements gathering, building the system definition, designing the system architecture, creation of the database schema, and implementation of the system using best practices for code security and maintainability. The solution was to build a multi-tier web application with scalability of up to 2,000 users while also integrating the system with Microsoft CRM, iSeries, and SQL Database data stores.

Benefits to the Client

Greater visibility into business processes allows ReaderLink to make more informed business decisions. The TRS platform enables quicker user navigation and data entry, as well as better administration tooling.

"I'm very impressed with the short turnaround on projects and enhancements that are given to this team, and they are also very patient when we throw some curve balls their way. Working with Pearl has been a great experience and I plan to use them as our consultant in the future."

– Field Service Operations Manager, ReaderLink

Bulk mailings have been reduced and document sharing is simpler and faster using the new document repository. The new system allows custom creation of client surveys, along with an easier process for management and distribution of results. User messaging capabilities enable direct communication through the portal between representatives and managers. Stronger time entry rules prevent users from abusing the system's robust functionality.

Client Reaction

"Throughout the past couple months, I have had the pleasure of working with Pearl Technology. The Pearl team built our new time reporting website that is used by our 2,000+ field employees. The scope for this project was very extensive, and of course, there were several enhancement requests along the way," says ReaderLink's Field Service Operations Manager. "Not only are they friendly and helpful to my team, but they are extremely knowledgeable, reliable, and professional."

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