SKYWARD

SKYWARD ACCELERATES TIME TO MARKET AND ACHIEVES A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN THE CLOUD WITH PROGRESS® OPENEDGE® AND ROUNDTABLE TSMS

SUPPORTING AGGRESSIVE RELEASE SCHEDULE AND MOVE TO AGILE DEVELOPMENT WITH ROUNDTABLE TSMS

For over 15 years, Skyward has relied on the Roundtable® Total Software Management System (TSMS) to optimize and streamline its Progress OpenEdge® development environment. A leading provider of K-12 school administrative software, Skyward serves over 1,700 school districts with its integrated student, finance, and human resources suite of products.

With over 100 developers operating in approximately 15 Scrum teams, Roundtable TSMS is vital to maintaining the highest levels of efficiency and quality through software configuration management and version control. "We do three major product releases each year, an update in between each release, and we release an addendum to our product every month to ensure customers have the latest product improvements and enhancements," explains Ray Ackerlund, Vice President, Marketing and Product Management for Skyward. "So versioning and productivity are key issues for us. Optimizing our developers' time and accurately tracking the variations are vital to maintaining our aggressive release schedule."

Prior to using Roundtable TSMS, Skyward developed its own internal controls. However, without software configuration management, the company faced a number of productivity and quality challenges. "We were losing code and developers were having to go back and rewrite what was lost. We also had no way to roll back our versions if we needed to, which complicated the enhancement process and compromised quality," explains Neal Schuh, Vice President of Programming for Skyward. "To support our anticipated business growth, we needed a far more sophisticated approach."

Skyward chose Roundtable TSMS over competing solutions because it was based on Progress OpenEdge and because Roundtable TSMS was an extremely intuitive, easy-to-use system. "Given we were already a Progress shop, it made sense to go with another OpenEdge-based solution. At the time we had 30 developers and I was able to get them all up and running with Roundtable TSMS within just two hours. Roundtable TSMS is incredibly intuitive and provides the level of automation and functionality we need to optimize our development efforts," says Schuh.

Since first implementing Roundtable TSMS in 1999, Skyward's business has changed significantly, tripling in size and moving from a Waterfall development approach to an Agile development methodology. "Despite adding more customers, more features, more developers, moving to SaaS and transforming our internal development strategy, Roundtable TSMS has kept pace with us each step of the way. It has continued to meet our expectations

CHALLENGE

Deliver innovative, scalable, high-performance solutions while maintaining an aggressive release schedule and responding to continuous change

SOLUTION

Progress OpenEdge and the Roundtable® TSMS Software Configuration Management solution

BENEFIT

Skyward has accelerated its time to market and increased its competitive edge with its Cloud-based Progress OpenEdge solutions. The flexibility of Roundtable TSMS enables Skyward to rapidly meet the needs of its customers and respond to market change while maintaining the highest levels of efficiency and quality through software configuration management and version control.

and be the best solution for us. With Roundtable TSMS and Progress OpenEdge, there are no limitations to what we can do," says Ackerlund.

Today, Skyward uses Roundtable TSMS to support its complex Agile development environment. The company uses Scrum teams to focus on different modules or enhancements across the two product lines. Not only are the teams working on development projects in parallel to support upcoming releases, but they are also constantly working on fixes and enhancements for previous releases.

"Roundtable TSMS is crucial to enabling multiple Scrum teams to work simultaneously on the same release, a process that has dramatically improved our productivity and time to market," says Keaven Olsen, Systems Manager for Skyward. "And with Roundtable TSMS's version control, we can easily go back to an older version to make an enhancement without any risk of affecting a future release."

For added security, Roundtable TSMS enables Skyward to secure all of their Workspaces (i.e., a configuration or view of the application at the given point in the lifecycle) and designate different permission levels. The senior programmers have the most rights to the schemas, as well as the ability to promote programs to specific Workspaces. And when the company is cutting releases, senior programmers have the ability to lock all Workspaces to ensure no programming changes can go into effect.

From a development perspective, Olsen says Roundtable TSMS and Progress OpenEdge have given Skyward a competitive advantage. "The quality of our products and our code is far better than the competition. As a result, we are able to get our solutions out to the market much faster."

The flexibility Roundtable TSMS affords is also crucial in an industry governed by a plethora of federal and state requirements. "With regulations constantly changing, it is critical that we provide customers with updates quickly to ensure their compliance. Roundtable TSMS and Progress OpenEdge gives us that ability to rapidly respond to market change. Our agility to help districts meet those guidelines error-free has become a true competitive advantage," says Ackerlund.

"I would highly recommend Skyward for any district focused on driving efficient and accurate state reporting. It is definitely one of the best systems that I have seen," says Jason Murray, Technology Coordinator for Cornwall-Lebanon School District. "With Skyward, we never have to worry about being caught off guard or being non-compliant."

Reliability has also proven to be a key differentiator for Skyward. "Most districts don't have an internal development or programming staff. So reliability and high performance are critical," explains Ackerlund. "Our ability to provide a state-of-the art, stable solution has become one of the cornerstones to our success and one of the key reasons we maintain a 99% retention rate. Roundtable TSMS is a critical element to maintaining that level of quality."

Skyward is committed to delivering innovation to its customers. The less time developers have to focus on code issues, the more time they have to dedicate to new solutions. "We are always looking for new ways to incorporate technology to improve the student, teacher and parent experiences," says Ackerlund. "We are constantly adding anywhere from three to four new modules into our product lines each year. With the help of Roundtable TSMS and Progress OpenEdge, we can ensure our business is always moving forward."

SKYWARD TRANSFORMS ITS BUSINESS WITH PROGRESS OPENEDGE AND THE CLOUD

Growing its business by a factor of three and scaling to support districts with upwards of 75,000 students, Skyward has evolved to become a formidable leader in its industry. For close to 20 years the company has relied on Progress OpenEdge to deliver state-of-the-art, competitive solutions.

"We first chose Progress OpenEdge because we liked the fact that the programming language and database came from the same vendor. We've been happy with Progress ever since. OpenEdge has proven to be a highly productive, scalable and innovative platform; it has never held us back," says Schuh.

Seven years ago, the company developed a SaaS offering of its solutions to penetrate new markets, increase its incremental revenue, and reduce both the sales and implementation cycle time.

"Despite adding more customers, more features, more developers, moving to SaaS and transforming our internal development strategy, Roundtable TSMS has kept pace with us each step of the way... With Roundtable TSMS and Progress OpenEdge, there are no limitations to what we can do."

Ray Ackerlund, Vice President, Marketing and Product Management, Skyward

PROGRESS

"Progress was extremely helpful during that transition period, from both an educational and resource standpoint. Talking with experts and taking part in various Partner+ Program Empowerment offerings helped us understand how SaaS was going to impact our business, how to mitigate any risks, and what changes we needed to make from a marketing and sales perspective to support the new model. It has been an outstanding change for our business," says Ackerlund.

In fact, two states that recently identified Skyward as a preferred vendor, Tennessee and Texas, both mandated SaaS as a requirement for consideration. "We wouldn't have even had the opportunity to bid on those deals, much less win them, without our SaaS offering," says Ackerlund.

In an industry ever cautious about spending, the Cloud offers districts access to a state-of-the-art system without the high up-front costs. "SaaS has made our solution accessible and far more appealing to districts either looking to stay within a budget or accelerate the implementation time," says Ackerlund. "We have been able to penetrate new markets that previously couldn't support a traditional pricing model."

The Cloud also provides Skyward's customers with quick access to any changes or updates. "When a new release of Skyward is available, we have almost immediate access to that new functionality. Skyward is responsible for the migration at their site, and we reap the benefits of the new enhancements with very little work required on our end," explains Dr. Timothy M. Mitchell, Superintendent of Schools for the Rapid City Area Schools (RCAS) District. "And when a new state or federal regulation is established, Skyward will make the necessary adjustments and quickly provide us with the update."

Compared to its on-premise offering, Skyward has slashed the implementation cycle with SaaS from one year down to six months or less. The company recently completed a large implementation for Fort Bend Independent School District in just three and a half months – a district with 70,000 students, 74 campuses and almost 8,000 employees. Since implementing Skyward, Fort Bend ISD has succeeded in driving operational consistency and discipline across the district, and increased the efficiency and productivity of the administrators.

"The implementation was nothing short of extraordinary. In three and a half months … we were able to integrate the Skyward system with other critical business systems, change our overall business processes dramatically, and train our employees on the new system and processes—right before the start of school. I think that is a phenomenal accomplishment," says Robert Calvert, Chief Information Officer for Fort Bend ISD.

"One of the greatest advantages of working with Progress is that they are just as committed to our success as we are. They are constantly giving us information and updates on what's new at Progress and engaging with us to find out how they can make a difference for us," says Ackerlund. "Progress's continued innovation and unwavering commitment to us through the Partner+ Program have been key to this long, and successful partnership."

"Progress was extremely helpful during that transition period [to SaaS], from both an educational and resource standpoint…It has been an outstanding change for our business."

Ray Ackerlund, Vice President, Marketing and Product Management, Skyward

"Progress OpenEdge has proven to be a highly productive, scalable and innovative platform over the years; it has never held us back."

Neal Schuh, Vice President of Programming, Skyward

ABOUT SKYWARD

Skyward is a leading provider of K-12 school administrative software that surpasses districts' needs in state reporting, improves operational capabilities, and opens communication between schools and families. Today, the Skyward School Management System™ is used in more than 1,700 school districts worldwide, ranging from districts with as few as 50 students to statewide implementations supporting more than 800,000 students. Founded in 1980, Skyward serves school districts with its integrated student, finance, and human resources suite of products and is proudly made and supported in the United States. www.skyward.com

ABOUT ROUNDTABLE SOFTWARE

POWERED BY PROGRESS

Roundtable Software is a leader in developing and supporting software applications for the demanding world of software development. Roundtable Software's product line includes Roundtable TSMS, a software configuration management solution for Progress OpenEdge development, and Roundtable Team, an Eclipse-based version control solution.

Roundtable Software is a Progress technology alliance partner. www.roundtable-software.com

PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or in the cloud, on any platform or device, to any data source, with enhanced performance, minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

WORLDWIDE HEADQUARTERS

Progress Software Corporation, 14 Oak Park, Bedford, MA 01730 USA Tel: +1 781 280-4000 Fax: +1 781 280-4095 On the Web at: www.progress.com

Find us on facebook.com/progresssw twitter.com/progresssw youtube.com/progresssw

For regional international office locations and contact information, please go to www.progress.com/worldwide

www.progress.com PROGRESS