Complimentary White Paper

Time to lead: why implementing a Microsoft SQL / .NET platform can position construction companies for success
For any organization, the decision to overhaul an enterprise technology system involves significant consideration, research, and investment. Company-wide change and the challenges that follow can be a big risk. What’s more, businesses may feel the burden of uncertain economic times, and opt to put their technology plans on hold until the storm passes. Still others may find it difficult to quantify the differences a technological change can make, and may instead focus on areas of business with more clear-cut payoffs.

This white paper will take a look at these challenges, as well as the gamble businesses take in delaying change. It will illustrate how a modern solution built on the Microsoft SQL / .NET can both mitigate the risk of investment, and also position a business for success in the long term.

**Gauging an organization’s readiness for change**

While any change involves challenges, holding firm to an aging technology platform can put companies at a competitive disadvantage. But how does a business know it’s time to make the leap? Companies should look for the following indicators when evaluating their readiness for change:

- **Painful process inefficiencies**
  How much time does it take to share information in your company? Are you processing transactions instead of analyzing them and solving problems? Oftentimes older systems store critical information in separate silos that don’t communicate with each other. This makes data difficult to retrieve and share. As a result, process becomes printout-intense with information passed manually between and within departments. Employees are often tasked with entering and re-entering data – not only creating process delays, but also increasing the likelihood of costly errors and inaccuracies.

- **Unnecessary maintenance expenses**
  How much money do you spend on third-party software? Do you need to purchase multiple add-ons to get your company to speed? Sometimes aging systems can’t accommodate modern tools and applications, so companies must invest in “workarounds.” This may include spreadsheet-based solutions or expensive peripheral software that may create even more work – or worse, become obsolete before it recoups its value.

- **Less credibility**
  Do existing customers and new
company recruits regard your business as forward thinking or behind the curve? Are they demanding new, more advanced technology from you? Today’s customers expect more collaboration and robust reporting, including project-specific websites equipped with the latest tools and functionality. Outdated, paper-laden no longer make the cut. These antiquated systems can also detract top, tech-savvy talent who expect to work with the latest, most efficient technology tools.

Making the switch: why Microsoft SQL / .NET

A new, modern technology platform can have a tremendous impact on a company’s efficiency, credibility, and bottom line. However, at first blush, deciding on which system to choose may seem like a daunting task. While careful needs assessment is critical, businesses often discover a narrow field of clear winners. Systems built on the industry-standard, award-winning Microsoft SQL / .NET platform are one obvious and smart choice, delivering the assurance of world-class technology leadership and proven productivity gains.

This platform enables software developers to create applications that work the way businesses do. Unlike with other solutions, developers can choose the components they need to produce versatile applications — and customers can build on their core software package by selecting the components that best serve their business needs. The Microsoft SQL / .NET platform enables businesses to integrate all corners of their organization, creating seamless communication and collaboration between employees and departments. It also allows the ability to provide visually stunning interfaces with robust grids, related tables, and roaming profiles that make it simple to find and interpret data, and share results. And it offers the foundation for easy system access anytime, anywhere with individualized settings and personalized folders for organizing programs, inquiries, and reports.

What to expect from a Microsoft SQL / .NET platform

Let’s take a closer look at how a robust system based on the Microsoft SQL / .NET platform can alleviate the pain points associated with making a technology shift and deliver clear competitive advantages for businesses.

Easy implementation and integration

The Microsoft SQL / .NET platform provides a framework for easier integration with Microsoft systems and leading construction applications and tools. What this means for companies is that they don’t have to introduce several new components in order for the system to work, and to carry out business as usual. Rather, the Microsoft SQL / .NET platform leverages the power of a company’s existing operating system, providing both cost and efficiency advantages.

The platform supports Microsoft Word, Excel, Access, and critical industry applications like report writers — so implementation is faster and more nimble, in comparison to other systems. What’s more, when Microsoft makes a technological change, it doesn’t affect the construction-specific system. Older systems that don’t boast a deep integration with Microsoft may not provide the same seamless experience.

Modular and customizable to specific business needs

Businesses harnessing the Microsoft SQL / .NET platform give developers the freedom to create software applications that utilize Microsoft
components. This enables developers to easily create a flexible, completely personalized system aligned with business needs and operations. With older systems, developers might have to dissect and re-write entire applications to make system-wide user interface or architectural changes, which could require months or years of work. In the .NET environment, developers can make user interface and other system wide changes without requiring complete re-writes.

**Simple to update and change**

Developers can painlessly add new features and functionality. Unlike with older systems, they can use the .NET language of their choice, picking the best tool for the job to create applications that integrate deeply with all components. And thanks to the platform's built-in functionality, they don't have to write as much code. Using Visual Studio, it's much easier for developers to create form layouts and create connections to the database. They can then focus most of their time on the business logic that ultimately delivers the most value to end-users.

**Fully scalable**

As companies grow and change, the Microsoft SQL / .NET platform has the ability to do the same. Its flexible architecture makes it easy to accommodate new employees and high usage as business develops.

**Low maintenance, superb support**

A system built on the Microsoft SQL / .NET platform generally requires less hardware and fewer IT staff to manage it. With daily backup and restore, database self-tuning and healing, and index creation, the system automatically performs routine maintenance procedures. However, should a problem occur, companies can access easy troubleshooting advice and responsive customer service, giving them the support they need to quickly get back to business.

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**Foward-thinking companies see slower times as an ideal period to make strategic decisions that will set them up for the long term.**

Think ahead: new technology means better productivity in busier times

In a struggling economy, it's easy to procrastinate when it comes to implementing a new technology platform. However, forward-thinking companies see this as an ideal period to make strategic decisions that will set them up for the long term. In slower times, they have more manpower to make necessary technological changes – so when they're back at 150% capacity, they can capitalize on the process efficiency and business advantages a new system affords. What's more, at some point, overhauling an antiquated system becomes an inevitable decision for any company – it's wise to do it before the system becomes obsolete or even worse, before process begins to fail client requirements.

The Microsoft SQL / .NET platform makes the decision simpler – putting businesses on the cutting edge and providing the robust capabilities clients, recruits, and employees require. Easy implementation and integration with existing systems make an organization-wide transition less cumbersome and time-consuming than it is with other systems. Plus, its modularity ensures faster development of new applications, and the ability to make updates as business grows and changes. With these efficiency gains and the backing of world-class technology leadership, the Microsoft SQL / .NET platform provides a compelling case for transitioning from an aging system – a decision that ultimately delivers more value and more profit to an organization's bottom line.