

By leveraging knowledge assets, WP Experts extracts healthy revenues from on demand opportunities



On Demand Business: What it means to WP Experts

- Success in SMB market with proven methodology
- Demonstrated value of portal solutions and IBM component-based infrastructure to keep pace with industry challenges
- Anticipated 80 percent of firm's revenues in coming year

Through a knowledge portal built by IBM Business Partner WP Experts, AO Foundation gives surgeons around the world on demand access to information that saves lives. This on demand operating environment, based on IBM technology, is the backbone supporting the foundation's overall mission: to improve the treatment of patients with trauma and disorders of the musculoskeletal system. It has also helped WP Experts build considerable muscle in the on demand world, where the firm is marketing its repeatable solution.

Headquartered in Cologne, Germany, WP Experts has carved out a lucrative niche by leveraging and adding value to IBM WebSphere Portal and Lotus Workplace in the on demand space. Its team of architects, consultants and developers helps companies optimize their resources and use technology to better meet their business objectives, by adding the power of Portal and J2EE technologies to their existing infrastructure investment.

WP Experts is drawing on best practices and leveraging expertise to build IT solutions – quickly and easily – for the on demand needs of small and medium sized

organizations, such as AO Foundation. Like a shot in the arm, WP Experts' responsiveness to these needs is providing a healthy boost to its revenues. As much as 60 percent to 70 percent of those revenues are now attributed to on demand business. With a strategic approach to identifying business pains and diagnosing solutions, WP Experts is fulfilling a prescription for success by positioning its services and extensive expertise in the on demand world.

Latest, greatest knowledge

AO Foundation is a case in point. Established in 1958, the Switzerland-based nonprofit entity promotes research and education in osteosynthesis, a technique used by surgeons to correct nearly 40 percent of all bone fractures. Most textbooks on the subject are either published by AO Foundation or written by one of its 250,000 certified surgeons worldwide. The foundation publishes new books and journals each year, sends quarterly member mailings, sponsors conferences and offers classroom instruction.

An IBM WebSphere® Portal solution built and delivered by WP Experts is supplying members with the latest and greatest knowledge on treating bone fractures with engineered implants. The portal captures and spreads new value from the organization's existing knowledge assets – through on-the-job surgical reference to best practices, collaboration among researchers, and access to instructional materials for professional certification.

But distributing content to the medical community and getting the knowledge into practice are two

entirely different concepts. "Most of a surgeon's day is dedicated to very practical work," explains Michael Redies, head of knowledge services, AO Foundation. "While our members would receive everything that we published, they simply didn't have time to read it."

WP Experts built a Web portal that now gives members easy, secured access to the organization's breadth of knowledge. Surgeons find relevant information – from archived images to step-by-step surgical procedures – in real time and from the convenience of their hospital settings.

"The portal puts all information in the context of a case, based on individual profiles submitted by users," explains Trabert. "The information is presented on demand, customized to the particular requirements of the surgeon."

In addition to acting as an on-the-job surgical reference, the portal is also helpful for keeping global resources connected. For example, doctors must meet ongoing continuing education requirements to keep their professional certifications current.

With the portal, AO instructors worldwide have access to the same syllabi, presentations and coursework to promote more consistent certifications. For the research community, the portal provides an online forum where scientists can share and collaborate on test results, regardless of their geographic location.

IBM WebSphere® Portal software was selected as the backbone for the environment to bring together various Lotus applications and knowledge

repositories in a cohesive platform. The entire environment is framed by IBM Tivoli® Access Manager software, which gives portal users a security-rich, single sign-on experience. The team implemented IBM DB2® Universal Database™ information management software and IBM DB2 Net Search Extender software to deliver rapid search functionality. IBM Tivoli Storage Manager software backs up AO's information assets and facilitates around-the-clock file access.

On demand approach

"We approach everything as an on demand business engagement," says Oliver Trabert, WebSphere Portal Architect, WP Experts. "Portals are very much an on demand play because they extend our client's business beyond the traditional walls and allow for collaboration and integrated processes. We can routinely demonstrate how a portal helps a company respond to rapid change and streamline processes. Those are the on demand challenges our clients are facing."

Equally important is how WP Experts delivers its services: quickly and affordably. This, too, resonates with WP Experts' SMB market. "They don't have the time or money for long and involved engagements," adds Trabert. "When you consider that the complexity of computer applications and systems continues to grow at an exponential rate, we can offer an integrated set of applications via an enterprise portal, very quickly. Our methodology shortcuts the analysis and decision-making traditionally required by portal architecture projects and creates results that keep pace with our client's business."

To do that, WP Experts relies on technical support from IBM and the breadth of resources available to developers like WP Experts through IBM. A key resource and one that has helped WP Experts entrench itself deeply in on demand business is IBM Patterns for e-business. This group of proven, reusable assets helps speed the process of developing and deploying solutions.

“The Patterns capture best practices, drawing on the expertise of multiple IT architects,” explains Trabert. “By making their knowledge reusable, you can go from requirements to implementation very quickly. You don’t have to determine which components go together; Patterns automatically map the correct products for the clients’ needs.”

The patterns are targeted to meet 80 percent of the most common customer requirements. But, according to Trabert, “if you use the patterns within a structured development methodology, you can extend their scope to meet 100 percent of your customer’s requirements.”

WP Experts points out to clients that if they consider implementing a portal using their own people, they will probably take three to ten times as much time to get to the same result.

The speed of the methodology certainly helps WP Experts win new business. But it also inspires confidence that the firm can actually deliver on the on demand promise. As Trabert notes, “The market is awash with people of widely varying levels of competency, who are marketing themselves as experts. The process we use ensures the delivery of solid

and properly architected solutions.”

Value of IBM relationship

WP Experts also trades on its relationship with IBM to help it secure on demand opportunities in the marketplace. Invited by IBM to co-author multiple IBM Redbooks on WebSphere Portal, WP Experts actively markets itself as a contributor to the growing body of knowledge embedded in the Patterns of e-business. “We get the projects because our clients recognize we have a proven approach and the expertise to execute it,” says Trabert.

By leveraging IBM Patterns for e-business, WP Experts deployed the portal quickly and securely. The standards-based modularity inherent in IBM software also contributed to the rapid, four-month development cycle. According to Trabert, “Out of the box, IBM software provides tremendous functionality, and the products all magically work together.”

The modularity also eases future development and enhancements to the portal as the user community grows and its needs change. This gives AO Foundation and many of WP Experts’ other clients the flexibility needed to continually enhance its constituents’ experience and to extract even greater value from its data in the future.

By pursuing the on demand opportunity with a proven methodology, WP Experts is demonstrating the value of its solutions against the business pains of AO Foundation and other organizations in the SMB market. And the firm’s own deep experience – and relationship with IBM – is opening up new opportunities for teaming,

including with IBM Global Services, which has called upon WP Experts’ skills in many engagements.

In fact, the firm is winning new business at a feverish pace, with engagements up X percent year over year. This, says Trabert, can be attributed to increasing awareness of on demand business and the significant return on investment.

That may be just what the doctor ordered. All told, Trabert expects the on demand opportunity from all industry sectors to represent as much as 80 percent of the firm’s business in the coming year.

“In industries that are undergoing rapid change – and many of them are – the on demand opportunities are simply too many and too good to be missed,” he adds.



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