



Customer: Precision.BI
Web Site: www.precisionbi.com
Customer Size: 25 employees
Country or Region: United States
Industry: Healthcare
Partner: GrapeCity
Partner Web Site: www.grapecity.com

Customer Profile

Precision.BI provides business intelligence and clinical intelligence solutions for the healthcare industry. The company is based in Wyomissing, Pennsylvania.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Visual Studio
 - Microsoft Visual Studio 2008 Professional
- ActiveX® Data Objects

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www.microsoft.com/casestudies

Third-Party Components Speed Delivery of Healthcare Business Intelligence Solution

“If I had needed to build the entire solution from scratch, without the help of GrapeCity components, I simply wouldn’t have been able to do it.”

Daniel Reber, Lead Product Architect, Precision.BI

Precision.BI needed powerful analysis and reporting components for its healthcare business intelligence solution. The company found what it needed in third-party components from GrapeCity, including functionality that enables users to explore huge quantities of data and to generate rich reports on an ad hoc basis. Precision.BI plans to continue taking advantage of GrapeCity’s rich components and excellent support as both companies migrate their software to Microsoft® Silverlight™ 3.

Business Needs

Healthcare organizations hold vast amounts of data in their IT systems—information that, if people could easily access and query it, could be used to drive competitive advantage and profitability. Precision.BI provides a solution—also called Precision.BI—that employs complex algorithms to help healthcare organizations better analyze and understand the huge amounts of data in their own repositories.

In delivering a solution, the developer working on the project faced several challenges. “Financial or industrial companies can easily integrate online analytical processing cubes into their solutions,” says Daniel Reber, Lead Product Architect

at Precision.BI. “However, medical data involves so many dimensions that using OLAP makes performance unacceptably slow. Reporting is also a challenge; not only does each organization have its own reporting needs, but individuals within a group also need to be able to design their own custom reports without technical skills.”

Solution

Precision.BI found the required capabilities in third-party components from Data Dynamics, which is now a part of GrapeCity. One such component is DynamiCube, which mimics the look and feel of an OLAP cube without the processing overhead, enabling Precision.BI users to explore and summarize huge

quantities of data instantaneously. Precision.BI also used ActiveReports, taking advantage of its application programming interfaces (APIs) to implement an easy-to-use report designer that enables end users to make queries and generate reports on an ad hoc basis.

The current version of the solution was developed using the Microsoft® Visual Studio® 2008 Professional development system. Moving forward, Precision.BI will use the Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 development system to rewrite its application on the Microsoft Silverlight™ 3 browser plug-in and Windows® Presentation Foundation. The company will replace DynamiCube with a Silverlight 3–based version of Data Dynamics Analysis, which GrapeCity plans to make available in early 2010. The component combines analysis, visualization, and reporting and is highly programmable so that Precision.BI developers can tailor the application's look and feel to meet users' needs.

For reporting, Precision.BI plans to use the Silverlight 3–based version of Data Dynamics Reports (also scheduled for future release), which, with little coding on the part of developers, enables end users to quickly create mini-reports with simple drag-and-drop gestures. Precision.BI also will use ActiveReports for Microsoft .NET, which is slightly more complicated but provides users with greater capabilities in formatting reports—as well as the ability to export data to formats such as Microsoft Office Excel® or Adobe Portable Document Format.

Benefits

By using the Visual Studio development system together with GrapeCity components, Precision.BI is able to deliver rich applications with limited development resources.

Benefits of the company's "buy what you can and build the rest" approach include:

- **Superior developer output.** With GrapeCity components, Precision.BI is able to deliver a good deal more functionality than otherwise possible. "I was the only developer working on this project for many years," says Reber. "If I had needed to build the entire solution from scratch, without the help of GrapeCity components, I simply wouldn't have been able to do it."
- **Strong technical support.** Reber also attributes his success to the excellent support that GrapeCity has provided. "When we run into a problem, they get back to us right away, either with a fix or a workaround," says Reber. "I initially chose DynamiCube and ActiveReports because they were the only components available that had the capabilities I needed, and I've stayed with GrapeCity all these years because of their great support."
- **Rich features.** GrapeCity components provide unique capabilities, which, as Reber puts it, "make both my life and end users' lives easier." A feature of Data Dynamics Analysis that he particularly appreciates is the ease of moving between numerical data and graphs and charts. "Not only can end users view the data in both numbers and graphs, but we can easily modify graph size, color, and other features to help them quickly grasp what's happening," he says. "And without DynamiCube, we probably wouldn't even have a crosstab module."
- **Consistent API model.** Reber also likes the fact that GrapeCity components work well together and have consistent, rich APIs. "The APIs all have the same look and feel, so after you learn one, you

can easily work with the others," he says. "Plus, the components expose a lot of APIs, which gives us plenty of flexibility and makes them highly extensible. Using the exposed APIs, we can create applications that make it easy for end users to tailor queries and reports to get the data they need."

Because of its 10-year history of successful partnership with the vendor, as Precision.BI maps out future products, GrapeCity components will continue to play a major role. "Pretty much all our plans involve GrapeCity components," says Reber. "With the time savings and unique capabilities they provide, plus the great support we get from GrapeCity, they're a key part of our technology strategy."

Microsoft Visual Studio 2008

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