



## Microsoft Visual Studio .NET Customer Solution Case Study



### PFIZER'S SALESMEN LAUD NEW, PROBLEM-FREE TERRITORIAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM DEVELOPED ON MICROSOFT .NET PLATFORM

#### Overview

Malaysia  
Pharmaceutical

Pfizer is the world's leading research-based health care company. It discovers, develops, manufactures and markets leading prescription medicines.

Pfizer's electronic territorial management system was plagued with the problems of system instability and data inaccuracy. This created a lot of frustration among the sales reps and the IT support staff.

Pfizer dropped the Java platform for the Microsoft .NET platform to develop the Pfixmax3 system. The web-based component runs on Windows Server 2003 and SQL Server 2000, while the mobile component operates on Microsoft Pocket PC 2003 and SQL Server CE 2.0.

- Happy customers
- Improves Decision Making
- Lowers Support Costs
- Productive Development Platform

CYBER VILLAGE

“With the .NET Framework, user-friendly development tools, and focus on web services, we knew we wouldn't go wrong in using the .NET platform.”

Tan You Houe, Senior Manager, Business Technology, Pfizer (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd

Global health care giant Pfizer developed an electronic territorial management system to manage the activities of its sales staff in Malaysia. However, it was plagued by system instability and data inaccuracy. This became a source of frustration among the sales reps and the IT support staff.

Pfizer then decided to discard the Java platform and switched to the Microsoft .NET platform. With .NET platform's user-friendly development tools and resources, and focus on web services, Pfizer knew it couldn't go wrong. With new Pfixmax3 system, the management can drill down and see the sales force's activities and performance in detail. This provides greater visibility into the sales operations, enabling them to make faster and more accurate decisions. The successful roll-out of Pfixmax3 has also turned



## Situation

Pfizer is the world's leading research-based health care company. It discovers, develops, manufactures and markets leading prescription medicines. Pfizer's history is one of innovation and adventure, of risks taken and bold decisions made.

Established in 1849, Pfizer has grown from a small family firm in Brooklyn, New York with two employees and a simple product into a global enterprise with 130,000 employees on six continents. Pfizer's purpose is to dedicate itself "to humanity's quest for longer, healthier, happier lives through innovation in pharmaceutical and consumer health products."

Operating in Malaysia for the past several decades, Pfizer Malaysia markets leading prescription medicines and many of the world's best-known consumer brands. With about 230 sales representatives nationwide, Pfizer Malaysia has its work cut out for it as it seeks to monitor the activities and performance of its sales force.

To help in managing its sales force, Pfizer had developed an electronic territorial management system named Pfimax which has been enhanced over the years. The first version was developed on the Lotus Notes platform and it was subsequently upgraded to comprise both a web-based and a PDA-based component. This upgraded system was developed by a vendor on the Java and Visual Basic platforms.

The sales reps were each equipped with pocket PCs and they are supposed to input information after each call or visit to a doctor or health care professional. On returning to the office, they will synchronize the PDA with the Pfimax system. The sales reps can also

input such information via the online version of Pfimax.

"This is a very important system for the company. It's the only tool which provides the management with information about the productivity and performance of the sales reps, as well as the performance of specific products," says Tan You Houe, Senior Manager, Business Technology, Pfizer (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

However, this version of Pfimax was plagued with problems from the start. It soon became a source of dissatisfaction and frustration among the sales reps and IT support staff.

The system was not performing as expected with system stability being the biggest issue, Tan says. Often, information could not be captured by the system and information was sometimes found to be missing. The system's instability also meant that data accuracy and availability were key issues.

The Business Technology (BT) Department was inundated daily with complaints and much of the support staff's time was wasted fire-fighting and trying to resolve the problems, he adds.

"Dissatisfaction with the system was mounting and, basically, the confidence of the field staff was shattered. We had angry (internal) customers. Obviously, the BT staff were under constant pressure and very stressed out," laments Tan.

"Not only was there a loss of staff productivity, the problems also created a tensed working relationship between the Sales and BT departments," he adds. With the uncertainty over the integrity of

information from the system, the management was also handicapped in its decision-making process.

Tan took over the whole BT Department in mid 2005, and was soon taking flak from unhappy users. He knew that drastic action had to be taken to resolve the problem. "We realized we could not carry on like this and decided to tear down the whole system and rebuild from scratch," he explains.

### Solution

By biting the bullet to replace the system, the BT Department put itself in a tight spot. It had to make sure the right platform was chosen so that it could build a new Pfixmax application that would work flawlessly.

This time, Pfizer decided to discard the Java platform and take advantage of Microsoft's newest development platform, Microsoft .NET.

"We knew that .NET was a big improvement over the previous development platform. With the .NET Framework, user-friendly development tools and resources, and its focus on web services, we knew we wouldn't go wrong in using this platform," explains Tan.

Pfizer found it could easily get local technical expertise and support from Microsoft partners to develop the new solution named Pfixmax3. In addition, Pfizer was also confident it could count on Microsoft to provide support in developing the new system.

Since the company adopts Microsoft technology across the board, Pfizer Malaysia was confident that the integration between Pfixmax3 and the backend systems would be relatively easy and seamless. "With .NET, it would be easy to integrate with our existing Microsoft environment. There's no need to create third party interfaces," Tan adds.

Pfizer Malaysia engaged Microsoft Certified Partner Cyber Village Sdn Bhd to develop the solution. Pfixmax3 was developed on the Microsoft .NET Framework, Visual Studio .NET and ASP.NET. The web-based component runs on Microsoft Windows Server 2003 and Microsoft SQL Server 2000, while the mobile component operates on Microsoft Pocket PC 2003 and Microsoft SQL Server CE 2.0.

Work on the project started in November 2005 and was ahead of schedule and ready for pilot testing in February 2006. The BT Department was ecstatic over the pilot results. Half expecting a flurry of complaints, all they got was silence. "We were very surprised by the pilot results. Nobody called us to complain about the system! Our worries were groundless," Tan says.

With the success of pilot, Pfizer aggressively rolled out the system to nine locations nationwide as well as Brunei within a month. The system caters to about 230 users in Malaysia. Pfixmax3 was so well received that Pfizer's Singapore office also wanted the system to be installed there for about 65 users.

Tan says the implementation proceeded smoothly with only a few minor issues which were easily resolved. "It was almost too good to believe! We learnt a lot from mistakes

made the last time, and ensured these were not repeated.”

He also commended Cyber Village for the excellent work done in developing the solution. “Having a stable system and a good business partner like Cyber Village really makes a world of difference,” he adds.

Tan also highlights the role of Microsoft Malaysia in making the project a success, particularly in helping to assess the system’s architecture design. Microsoft also provided invaluable advice to Cyber Village on the use of the duplication component in Microsoft SQL 2000 during the development process.

The replication component was used to ensure smooth integration between the databases in the 230 PDAs and Pfimax3’s main SQL Server 2000 database. “This replication component is working very well. Its capturing all the required data and we don’t have any missing data at all. The system is very stable now,” says Lee Chai Chin, Cyber Village’s E-Business Manager.

Lee points that the previous vendor had used third party tools to integrate with SQL Server 2000, and this contributed to some of the previous system’s drawbacks.

## Benefits

### Happy Customers

The problem-free Pfimax3 solution has turned formerly disgruntled sales reps into happy customers, dramatically improving relations between the Sales and the BT departments.

“The avalanche of complaints we used to receive has disappeared. Instead of

complaints, we got thank you notes from them! It’s a situation which we could not have imagined six months ago.”

Tan says the sales reps are now more motivated and productive because Pfimax3 is no longer a tool which burdens but rather helps them in their business. “When they are happy, you don’t need to motivate them. And when productivity improves, revenue will also go up,” he adds.

Tan says not only are the sales reps happy, the management and BT staff are just as pleased. “Our BT staff are relieved because they don’t have to stay late in the office every day to resolve problems with the system.”

### Improves Decision Making

Tan confirms that the Pfimax3 is “very stable” and accuracy of information, consistency and availability is no longer an issue. “The Pfimax3 system is virtually on auto-pilot. It is that stable,” he adds.

“Previously, because of stability issues we couldn’t give the management totally accurate information ... nobody trusted the information. This is no longer the case with Pfimax3.”

With accurate real-time information, the management can drill down into the system and see the activities and performance of the sales force in great detail. This gives them greater visibility into the sales operations, enabling them to make faster and more accurate decisions, says Tan.

### Lowers Support Cost

The reliability of Pfimax3 has significantly lowered the cost of supporting the system. “Previously, I used to get about 100 emails

each day complaining about the system. But since the deployment of Pfimax3, I hardly even get one," he adds.

With Pfimax3, BT staff no longer need to camp at the office or work over the weekends like they had to under the previous system. "Not only do we enjoy cost savings, staff morale has improved and motivation levels have also gone up."

By not being bogged down by a problematic system, BT staff are able to focus their attention on ways to use IT to support Pfizer's other business units. "Now we can redeploy our resources to work on matters which bring greater value to the business," says Tan.

#### **Productive Development Platform**

The .NET platform has enabled Pfizer to turn a complex project into relatively easy one in terms of development. Tan says the .NET platform's user friendliness and its integrated development tools have helped speed up significantly the development cycle.

"With .NET, many components are available and it makes the project's development cycle much shorter," says Tan. This enabled the development team to roll out the system ahead of schedule, he adds.

"Since many components are already available we don't need to develop it from scratch. For example, there is a module in .NET which facilitates development for PDAs," says Lee. This helped make the development for the PDA component "a lot easier and faster," he adds.

Lee affirms that the user friendly .NET platform facilitates speedy and efficient development because it supports the debugging of codes. In addition, the "updating and managing of the code is much easier," he adds.

The successful development and deployment of Pfimax3 under the .NET platform has totally vindicated Tan's decision to revamp its territorial management system.

Pfizer's next challenge is to develop "the industry's best-in-class Field Force Automation System" by 2007. And Tan confirms that .NET will be the development platform for this challenging venture.

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: [www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about Pfizer products and services, call (6) (03).5568-6688 or visit the Web site at: [www.pfizer.com](http://www.pfizer.com)

For more information about Cyber Village Sdn Bhd's products and services, call (6) (03) 7724-1377 or visit the Web site at: [www.cyber-village.net](http://www.cyber-village.net)

© 2006 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. This case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY. Microsoft, the .NET logo, SharePoint, Visual Basic, Visual Studio, the Visual Studio logo, Windows, the Windows logo, and Windows Server are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Document published June 2006

## Microsoft Visual Studio .NET

The Microsoft .NET Framework is an integral Windows® component for building and running the next generation of applications and XML Web services.

[msdn.microsoft.com/netframework](http://msdn.microsoft.com/netframework)

Microsoft Visual Studio .NET is the rapid application development (RAD) tool for building next-generation Web applications and XML Web services. Visual Studio .NET empowers developers to rapidly design broad-reach Web applications for any device and any platform. In addition, Visual Studio .NET is fully integrated with the Microsoft .NET Framework, providing support for multiple programming languages and automatically handling many common programming tasks, freeing developers to rapidly create Web applications using their language of choice.

[msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio](http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio)

Acquire Visual Studio .NET:  
[msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/howtobuy](http://msdn.microsoft.com/vstudio/howtobuy)

MSDN(r) Subscriptions:  
[msdn.microsoft.com/subscriptions](http://msdn.microsoft.com/subscriptions)

## Software and Services

- Microsoft Visual Studio .NET
- ASP.NET
- Microsoft Windows Server 2003
- SQL Server 2000
- Microsoft Pocket PC 2003
- SQL Server CE 2.0

## Technologies

Microsoft .NET Framework

**Microsoft®**