For close to 40 years, Quasimodo Ltd. has continued to evolve its business strategy, expertise and solutions to support market change and customer demand for state-of-the-art technology. Partnering with Progress Software back in the late 1980’s, Quasimodo has continuously modernized its Progress® OpenEdge®-based application set over the years, creating a new rich user interface, adding web and RFID capabilities and, most recently, delivering two new mobile applications to market. The result: Quasimodo continues to satisfy its customers and maintain an advantage over its competitors.

**THE EVOLUTION OF A MARKET-LEADING APPLICATION DEVELOPER**

Few companies can boast 40 years of success. And that statement is even more applicable to companies operating in the highly volatile, dynamic high tech
industry. But Quasimodo Ltd. has managed to not only survive over the years, but to thrive as an innovator and market leader.

Quasimodo’s continued success is rooted in the company’s ability to identify and capitalize on constantly changing market trends and customer demand. In the early 1970’s, before there were applications available on the market for small and medium size companies, Quasimodo was performing its own custom programming from scratch. With the introduction of personal computers in the early 1980’s the company partnered with Libra Programming to become its sole distributor to the Canadian market of an out-of-the-box, single-user application.

As market demand shifted towards multi-user solutions in the mid 1980’s, Quasimodo moved away from Libra and partnered with Concept Omega to distribute both their business applications and operating system, becoming their most active and prolific distributor in North America. Toward the late 1980s, Quasimodo again sensed the need to make a change when the store-brand operating system and business basic language demonstrated liability and upgradability issues.

Rather than looking for a new product to distribute however, Quasimodo took the leap into application software development—and hasn’t looked back since. Serge Laforge, Vice President of Quasimodo explains: “We’d been in the business for a very long time. With the domain expertise we accumulated over the years we felt confident that we could design our own applications from scratch and successfully sell those applications to the Canadian marketplace.”

POWERWARE-ERP—POWERED BY PROGRESS

Quasimodo realized that in order to deliver the best product it needed to use the best platform. In the late 1980’s, Quasimodo launched its search for the best database engine and tools on which to build its new application. “We did extensive research on what the market had to offer—you name it, we looked at it,” says Laforge. “While we did initially consider Oracle, it was far too expensive—completely out of the range for a company of our size. Then we discovered Progress Software and found that the quality of the database and the allotment tools were just as good as Oracle, but offered at a far more reasonable price point and lower total cost of ownership.”

Serge Laforge
Vice President
Quasimodo Ltd.
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Using the Progress OpenEdge application development platform, Quasimodo developed its own ERP application—PowerWARE-ERP—in 1989, targeting distribution and manufacturing organizations with solutions for finance, invoicing, order entry, inventory control, and more. Quickly finding success selling into its own customer base, the company accumulated the capital required to conduct an extensive redevelopment of all of its existing tools. “We hired over 20 programmers to reprogram all of the solutions that we had built over the years, making our entire portfolio exclusively Progress.”

ONGOING SUCCESS WITH CONTINUOUS APPLICATION MODERNIZATION

One of Quasimodo’s strengths has always been its ability to adapt to and capitalize on change ahead of the market and the competition. When Microsoft launched its Windows platform, Quasimodo quickly saw that the market at large would soon demand a similar look and feel across all software applications. “It was a question of survival. We had to come up with a strategy that would enable us to deliver the GUI-rich functionality our customers wanted and expected to maintain our competitive advantage,” explains Laforge.

While Quasimodo was very satisfied with Progress and knew Progress offered GUI development tools, the company took nothing for granted and launched a search to identify the various tools available on the market. “It had been many years since our initial investment in Progress,” says Laforge. “We wanted to make sure that Progress could continue to support our ability to react to ever-changing market conditions for superior high-tech solutions, and also that it remained viable and well-positioned in the industry.”

After a thorough review process, Quasimodo chose to stay with Progress and adopt all of the new development tools it had to offer. “It made sense to stay with Progress. They offered the technology we needed to evolve our solution, a strong global reputation for excellence, and all of our employees were well trained on Progress technology.”

“... it would have taken us months, perhaps years, to come up with a new product written in another language, like Java. And we would have lost our invaluable intellectual property that our developers accumulated over the decades, beyond just their coding capability.”

Serge Laforge
Vice President
Quasimodo Ltd.
Years later Laforge said Quasimodo clearly made the right decision: “Progress kept us alive by enabling us to quickly develop a Windows-like application. In fact, where most vendors were just developing a new GUI frontend on top of their old code, we were able to quickly and easily re-develop all of our applications and GUI to produce a better, more advanced solution.”

The decision also saved Quasimodo the time and costs associated with replacing the majority of its programmers. “If we moved away from Progress, it would have cost us an arm-and-a-leg to reprogram everything using another tool,” explains Laforge. “We would’ve had to replace some of our experienced staff who developed our original character-based application. In all likelihood, it would have taken us months, perhaps years, to come up with a new product written in another language, like Java. And we would have lost our invaluable intellectual property that our developers accumulated over the decades, beyond just their coding capability.”

RELIABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY CRITICAL DIFFERENTIATORS

Key to Quasimodo’s decision to stay with Progress was the flexibility and reliability of OpenEdge. “The quality of the product is superb,” says Laforge. “We were confident that whatever we wrote—two years or five years ago, in version 9 or 10—would still work in the next version. So, that’s very important to us; we don’t want to spend our time reprogramming everything because a new version doesn’t support existing functionality. Progress offered that stability for us as well as reduced administrative costs. The key point in any business is making money—not losing money. Fast and easy upgrades give us a low cost ability to generate additional revenue. And our customers are able to quickly take advantage of new enhancements and functionality.”

Quasimodo’s customers also recognize and appreciate the flexibility and reliability of its OpenEdge-based ERP system. “We have large customers that are using a number of different systems across their infrastructure—Oracle, SAP, etc.,” says Laforge. “And we often hear that our solution is the most reliable of all of the applications they use.”

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The ability to respond to customer requests quickly and at minimal cost has proven to be a significant advantage for Quasimodo. “If a customer comes to us with a new request, for example, a UI change or customization, we typically send them a quote for a couple of hours vs. the 20+ hours they could expect from one of our competitors. And when we implement an upgrade, we can guarantee that any previous customization work will be functional in the new release—without any additional work or cost on our part.”

THE MOVE TO MOBILITY

Over the years, Quasimodo has continued to evolve its PowerWARE solution set, offering web-based and RFID bar coding functionality. The newest challenge and opportunity for Quasimodo has been mobility. And just as they have in the past, Quasimodo has again adapted its business and technology to support this rapidly growing trend.

Today, the company offers a CRM module on the Android tablet to help its customers better manage their relationship with their B2B clients—anywhere, anytime. Quasimodo has also introduced a new product, the ES-400 running on Windows CE mobile devices, geared for the traveling sales professional. Using a mobile device, the solution allows the sales rep to visit with clients onsite and capture and track the entire sales process, including the ability to capture the customer’s signature for immediate approvals. With a Bluetooth printer attached to their belt, the sales rep can then print out the customer’s receipt. Seconds later the order is in the company’s system, ready for processing.

“Evolving our solution to support mobility is something we knew would be important to the long-term success of our business,” explains Laforge. “Mobile support has become a competitive advantage for both us and for our customers. We are helping them to be more efficient, productive and recognize revenue faster. When our customers are successful, we are successful.”

Laforge says their two mobile solutions have been well received by the majority of Quasimodo’s clients and that they have already secured some very large contracts. Most of Quasimodo’s competitors are not offering
their own mobility solutions yet, instead choosing to partner with third-party vendors like Microsoft. “For example, take our CRM mobility solution. Essentially our competitors attach Microsoft’s CRM to their own ERP. The benefit of our approach is that the CRM is integrated into our solution—we don’t have to maintain a relationship with multiple vendors to keep our software going. We are a one-stop-shop and that makes us far more agile, reliable, cost effective and attractive than our competitors.”

Today, Quasimodo’s mobility solutions are used on Android and Windows CE mobile devices, and the company can easily expand the solutions to other mobile platforms in the future. Because Quasimodo is using Adobe Flash, their applications are not yet supported on iPad, but Quasimodo found a solution “There is a new studio compiler that will enable us to reuse our technology and slightly modify it to fit on an iPad,” explains Laforge. “So, with just a few weeks of effort, our applications will be compatible with the iOS. The important thing is that we have written one application that can be deployed on multiple platform types—whether you have a Windows notebook, whether you’re using an Apple laptop, or an Android.”

PROTECTING ITS CUSTOMERS WITH OPENEDGE REPLICAION

For some of Quasimodo’s customers, downtime of any kind—even due to catastrophes or disasters—is simply not an option. To serve those customers, Quasimodo offers OpenEdge® Replication®—automatic, real-time data protection that minimizes the impact of system downtime in the event of unforeseen circumstances.

“By ensuring our customers’ mission-critical systems are available 24/7/365, we can help them prevent significant revenue loss or the fallout from a damaged reputation,” says Laforge. “We have some very large companies, for example, in the distribution industry, that require a fail-safe solution. I am able to say, ‘no problem, we have a replication tool made by Progress that is totally compatible with your existing PowerWARE application.’ OpenEdge Replication is just one more tool in our arsenal to meet the needs of our customers and alleviate any concerns.”

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Laforge says OpenEdge Replication is the best solution for their customers versus virtualization which only answers a portion of a disaster recovery strategy. “OpenEdge Replication protects the heart of your information that needs to be very secure—your ERP, your database. That’s worth a lot of money. We had one customer choose the virtualization route. The customer called me in a panic because none of their servers were working; they couldn’t access their database and estimated they were losing four to five days of work. He said, ‘Tell me what I need to buy from you to get it up and running because I know your solution will work. I trust you. I’ve been doing business with you for fifteen years, and software-wise, you’re the best.’ Within a matter of hours we had them up and running. And today, with branches in Pennsylvania, Boston, and a few plants in Quebec, they are protected and extremely happy with their decision.”

FORWARD MOMENTUM WITH PROGRESS SOFTWARE

For Quasimodo, Progress has liberated the company from the constraints of technology—providing the organization with the freedom and agility to change and grow with its customers.

“Our Progress products don’t hold us back, but rather empower us to continuously modernize our solutions to adapt to new trends and meet market demands. We ultimately determine what the next move is for our organization based on business decisions, not based on what our technology can support. That’s why we are able to keep up with our customers while staying one step ahead of the competition. We could not have reached this level of success without the added value of OpenEdge.”

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QUASIMODO LTD.
Headquartered in Canada, Quasimodo Ltd.'s fully integrated PowerWARE Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution enables manufacturers and distributors to automate and optimize their operations and business processes. With the help of Quasimodo’s consulting services, customers are empowered with a solution that meets the specific needs of their business. For more information visit: http://www.quasimodo.ca/ENG/eng_home.html.

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 on any Cloud, on any platform and on any device with 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 refer to the Web page below: www.progress.com/worldwide

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