



Overview

The need

CST Consulting S.r.l. needed help developing a mobile travel management app for business travelers using multiple device types, as well as for staff who manage travel planning, expense reimbursement and reporting.

The solution

CST used IBM® MobileFirst® Platform Foundation (formerly IBM Worklight® Foundation) and IBM Business Process Manager (BPM) software to develop and test an integrated multiplatform app that is easily customizable to conform to corporate travel policies.

The benefit

CST gained revenue by selling an effective app to customers, while developers became more productive by reusing code to create versions of the app for multiple mobile environments.

CST Consulting S.r.l.

Development team gains efficiency in creating multi-platform apps for corporate customers

CST Consulting S.r.l. is an IT consulting, system integration, and technology and business services provider that specializes in design, development, management, and outsourcing of enterprise content and process management solutions, as well as solutions based on software from SAP AG. The company has more than 110 employees and is headquartered just outside Milan, Italy.

Mobile developers need help

CST had developed a mobile app to help a specific customer manage corporate travel for some 3,000 road warriors. Travelers using the app to book travel appreciated its power and ease of use, as did staff who manage travel approvals, expense reimbursement and reporting on travel costs.

After using the app for one year, the travel management team became so efficient that six employees did the work formerly done by 11. Similarly, the timeline to approve a travel request dropped from two weeks to three days.

CST Consulting uses IBM MobileFirst Platform Foundation software to streamline development of multiplatform mobile apps. “This MobileFirst solution enables us to quickly release new features and apps for different mobile operating systems with very little customization,” says Diego Battaglia, project manager of the MyTravelTool app at CST Consulting S.r.l.



Seeing the potential to sell the app to the broader travel management market, CST's executives decided to "productize" it. This meant redeveloping the app for use by a variety of enterprises. The packaged app would need new features and have to be continually improved, and it should run on premises or in the cloud. To adapt to different travel management processes and workflows, the app should be easy to customize and integrate with enterprise systems such as accounting and web services such as travel booking. And it should support popular mobile environments such as iOS, Android and BlackBerry.

Because CST had only a few programmers dedicated to mobile development, the prospect of creating app versions in the native language of each mobile operating system (OS) was daunting. Not only would this require deep expertise in the OSs, but every new feature or upgrade would need to be coded separately for each version. Thus, CST sought a development platform that would improve programming efficiency and the productivity of the small team without requiring expertise in each OS.

The second challenge involved creating an easily customizable app. The solution was to use IBM Business Process Manager (BPM) software within the app. This meant that the development platform would have to be integrated with the BPM software.

Improving time to market of mobile apps

After evaluating several potential solutions, CST selected the IBM MobileFirst Platform Foundation solution. This development platform supports multiple mobile operating environments and devices with the simplicity of a single, shared code base.

CST chose the IBM product largely because of its built-in intelligence and powerful development capabilities. Developers gain the ability to write code for new apps and features once and then reuse the code to support different mobile OSs with little use of the native languages. In other words, once they master the MobileFirst Platform Foundation software they can write apps for all the major mobile OSs and devices. Developers also liked the platform's robust mobile security, the ease of creating offline app modules, and the ease of testing new features and apps. In addition, it was simple to integrate with the BPM software for workflow customization.

Solution Components

- IBM® MobileFirst® Platform Foundation (formerly IBM Worklight® Foundation)
 - IBM Business Process Manager
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After attending short training labs given by IBM, CST's developers used the platform to create MyTravelTool, a travel management app for iOS and Android mobile devices. The app met every requirement and was completed in just two months. Versions for BlackBerry and Windows Phone devices will follow shortly.

Empowering developers to be more productive

MobileFirst Platform Foundation software has enriched MyTravelTool, helping mobile travelers to plan business trips and managers to shorten approval times. Its built-in intelligence and security improves developer productivity in creating apps that support multiple mobile OSs. This saves time and reduces development costs, through both higher productivity and not having to hire or train developers in each mobile OS. These benefits will compound over time as CST enhances MyTravelTool and develops new mobile apps for other customers and markets.

For more information

To learn more about IBM MobileFirst Platform Foundation and IBM Business Process Manager software, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following websites:

ibm.com/software/products/et/mobilefirstfoundation

ibm.com/software/products/business-process-manager-family



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