CASE STUDY

# Optimal Payments

Optimal Payments used Macromedia® Flex™ to create a Rich Internet Application
that combined all of its major systems into one easy-to-use interface.

## Customer Profile

**Name**
Optimal Payments

**Industry:**
Financial Sector,
Payment Processing

**Headquarters:**
Montreal, Canada

**URL:**
www.optimalpayments.com

**Technology Solution**

Macromedia® Flex™

## The Company

Optimal Payments, a Macromedia Alliance Partner, is a global provider of proprietary payment processing services. Businesses require their technology and services to accept credit and debit card and direct debit payments.

Optimal Payments processes credit and debit card payments for Internet, mail-order/telephone-order, and bill payment transactions, as well as processing direct debits online and by phone. The company handles over $2 billion transactions each year for thousands of merchants worldwide.

## The Challenge

Processing electronic payments is a complex and highly automated business. Optimal Payments was primarily using two systems in its operations: a third-party customer relationship management (CRM) system and Microsoft Outlook for responding to customer emails. The company needed a way to tie these applications together to deliver a complete "customer support management" solution. Additionally, the company wanted the ability to generate statistics to measure the efficiency of each department as they dealt with various customer issues.

## The Solution

In evaluating what technology to use to build its new customer support management tool, code-named Phoenix, Optimal Payments drew upon their previous development experience. Earlier application development efforts had used Macromedia Flash®, Macromedia ColdFusion® for J2EE, Swing, JSP, Java-Script, BEA Web-Logic, and JSF. They initially selected JSP (with taglibs) to develop Phoenix, but they were looking for a rich client solution. "We really wanted to build this with technology that was designed for our team, one that leveraged our development skills and workflow," said Dimitrios Gianninas, application developer. It was then that Optimal Payments received the beta version of Macromedia Flex presentation server.

**The Results**

"When we started playing with the Flex beta, we set out to recreate the same user interface that we built in JSP to do a comparison. What we found was that we could build an even more enhanced interface in less time and with 35% less code compared to what we were able to do in JSP. Additionally, we were able to add some built-in components that come with Flex, like tab controls and menu drop-downs. They were very simple to use and if we would have done the same thing in JSP, we would have been sitting there for two months just doing those two elements," added Gianninas.

From that point forward, Optimal Payments was determined to leverage the initial efficiencies they found in Flex for Phoenix's development. "We found several things in Flex that are just not possible in traditional HTML, or would be so time-consuming using JavaScript that we would never meet our deadlines," added Stacy Young, application developer.

Optimal Payments has received many benefits directly impacting their ROI since the launch of Phoenix. According to Gianninas, Phoenix has become a major asset to the company in several areas including productivity, scalability and reporting, which are highlighted below:

- Efficiency: Average response time reduced by 120%.
- Productivity: Reduced issue to resolution time with quicker response to tickets, and in the correct order.
- Scalability: With built-in administrative screens, Phoenix can be managed in real-time keeping customer service and technical support in sync with the constantly changing new business requirements.
- Reporting: Statistics tracked daily to address anomalies in days instead of weeks, or never.
- ROI: Phoenix was built internally within three months, which saved up to eight weeks of development time. They also gained additional savings by building Phoenix internally instead of opting for a costly third-party product.

"Optimal Payments' success is based on providing easy, worldwide access to the underlying complexity of electronic payments," said David Jokinen, vice president of product development. "Flex fits right into our strategy, helping us deliver the best customer experience at the lowest cost-and with the fastest time to market."

## Benefits Summary

- It took 35% less code to produce a superior user interface with Flex compared to one developed with JSP.
- Built-in components included with Flex are easy-to-use and reduce development time.
- Flex provides a better user experience and development workflow.
- Problem of redundantly entering same data into multiple systems was eliminated.
- Installation issues surrounding previous, thick-client system were solved.
- Staff got reports and statistics on inbound inquiries, which streamlined processes.
- Flex application looks great and offers extended functionality that is either impossible or extremely difficult to attain in traditional HTML applications.

"Flex fits right into our strategy, helping us deliver the best customer experience at the lowest cost– and with the fastest time to market."

**David Jokinen**
Vice President of
Product Development
Optimal Payments

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