

## Case Study: A New Prescription for Efficiency and Productivity at a Health Sciences Institution

Promoting health through advanced biomedical research, graduate-level education in the life sciences and health professions, and excellence in patient care is the mission and commitment of this prominent university. The university's growth and its never-ending quest for distinction necessitated a significant technology refresh, specifically a new application platform and accompanying applications. Software Next Door was brought on board to help roll out the new technology based on Force.com.

### Background

The university is one of the world's leading centers of health sciences research, patient care and education. In addition to being among the top health science schools in the world, its Medical Center is consistently ranked among the top by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Superior patient care and leading edge research depends on both efficiency and effective collaboration. To deliver on their mission meant updating the university's technology infrastructure and supporting applications to match their world-class educational and research results.

### The Challenge

The ever increasing demand for departmental and enterprise applications was causing IT to spend a growing share of its precious resources on infrastructure and maintenance. Productivity was being affected because existing systems couldn't scale or evolve to meet new requirements. In addition, collaboration within the organization was not effective and led to duplicated efforts. Finally, any technology additions or changes had to meet rigorous measures of performance, security and scalability.

In this environment, more and more departmental and enterprise applications were sharing data and business logic. To better serve the growing needs of the university and its constituents, a common development platform and a suite of updated applications simply made good technical and business sense. If properly deployed and secured, a new platform would free up limited IT resources, enabling the focus to shift from maintenance to innovation.

One of the university's software-as-a-service vendors, Salesforce.com, recently opened up its technology infrastructure, enabling anyone to use it for custom application development and to take advantage of the vendor's large-scale server farm. The cloud platform to support new applications, called Force.com, was an ideal selection. The ability to migrate to Force.com, however, was hampered by a lean and resource-constrained IT department. Outside assistance was needed,



but engineers experienced in the technology were in high demand and therefore hard to locate, had limited availability and were expensive.

### **The Solution**

After selecting Force.com, the university wanted to move quickly, but lacked sufficient internal resources to make it happen. Several US-based consulting firms had been used in the past for various IT projects, but it was not clear that they could provide the resources needed for building out applications using the Force.com cloud.

In seeking a partner for the project, the university required:

- Experienced Salesforce.com developers with a deep understanding of the Force.com platform, Apex programming and configuration
- Excellent communication and translation of requirements into working software
- Working experience with Agile methodologies

The university had been in discussions with Software Next Door, a nearshore development firm, regarding a variety of projects. When Force.com was selected, Software Next Door demonstrated a deep understanding of the immediate needs and was able to staff the project with experienced Salesforce.com developers in a reasonable timeframe. The choice for an ideal partner for the university was clear.

*"It was a challenge to find experienced and available Force.com engineers who wouldn't cost us a King's ransom. Software Next Door provided high quality professionals in a timely fashion at a price that fit our budget, especially compared to equivalent alternatives. Everything went so smoothly that after an initial project, we quickly expanded to half a dozen new projects. "*

*– University Deputy Directory, IT Services*

### **Results with Software Next Door**

Collaboration between the university and Software Next Door started with nearshore engineers supporting current development efforts for departmental applications until released in a production environment. Together, the internal IT team and Software Next Door engineers solved issues integrating Force.com with on-premise systems. Over time new projects were added that included requirements analysis, design, development and testing. The projects selected for implementation using Force.com were all strategic to the ongoing research, teaching and patient care activities, and had the potential to substantially improve the university's collaborative efforts and overall productivity.

"We take pride in offering high-quality engineers with in-demand skills at a competitive price," said Dan Federman, chief executive officer at Software Next

Door. “Internally, our engineers have clamored for the chance to work with this prestigious group. They feel good about the impact they’re ultimately having on the health and wellness of everyone.”