



Overview

The need

Payment logistics specialist
ABK-Systeme saw an opportunity to bring mobile applications to the financial services industry. To seize the advantage, the company needed to move fast.

The solution

ABK-Systeme built a comprehensive software development platform with IBM® Worklight® Foundation running on an IBM zEnterprise® BC12 server.

The benefit

ABK-Systeme is ideally placed to move into the mobile applications space, gaining a head start against the competition in bringing secure, reliable mobile applications to customers faster.

ABK-Systeme GmbH

Bringing innovative mobile applications to the financial services industry

Headquartered in Dreieich in Germany, ABK-Systeme GmbH is a leading provider of electronic payments in Europe. The company employs 42 people, developing solutions that enable exceptionally secure and rapid payments transfers, designed for almost any platform, including mobile, mainframe, tablet and PC. ABK-Systeme is part of the Paymentgroup and is growing at an average rate of 10 percent per year.

Capitalizing on the mobile opportunity

In the payments sector, security is a paramount concern. As a result, the financial services industry has often been slow on the uptake of new technologies, preferring to wait until solutions are tried and tested. As consumers demand more, however, the benefits of being cautious can be outweighed by the risk of losing competitive advantage.

ABK-Systeme saw an opportunity to capitalize on the opportunities offered by mobile applications: giving users the ability to benefit from innovative solutions that streamline payment logistics and increase productivity while on the move.

Today, ABK-Systeme no longer develops and maintains different software for different mobile device platforms. "We streamlined development processes and improved code reuse. This allows rapid releases of new mobile applications for multiple platforms, bringing innovations faster to our customers," says Ulrich Buch, CTO, ABK-Systeme.



Solution components

Hardware

- IBM® zEnterprise® BC12

Software

- IBM Worklight® Foundation on Linux for System z®
- IBM WebSphere® Application Server
- IBM DB2® for Linux, UNIX and Windows

Services

- IBM Software Services
-

Ulrich Buch, CTO at ABK-Systeme, explains, “We see big potential for mobile applications for our business-to-business offerings, and did not want to lose ground in a competitive marketplace by moving too slowly. The challenge lay in creating applications that could offer the same level of exceptional security and performance as our advanced payment platform – no small feat.”

ABK-Systeme also wanted to replicate a key selling point of its traditional solutions when developing mobile applications: platform independence. The company began looking for a flexible, comprehensive software development environment to meet these needs.

Finding ways to move quickly and securely

To create an efficient environment for mobile application development, ABK-Systeme deployed IBM Worklight Foundation on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server, running on its existing IBM zEnterprise BC12 server. Offering an end-to-end solution for software development and lifecycle management, IBM Worklight is helping the company move fast on the mobile opportunity.

Dominik Weitz, Software Developer at ABK-Systeme says, “IBM Worklight provides us with ready-to-use adapters that easily connect to existing web services and applications. The solution integrated seamlessly with our existing environment of IBM WebSphere Application Server and IBM DB2 database software, so we could get to work on development sooner rather than later.”

“Developing cross-platform mobile apps with IBM Worklight reduces our software maintenance costs. By helping us work more efficiently, the solution enables us to focus on developing new features and cutting development cycles.”

— Ulrich Buch, CTO, ABK-Systeme

Ulrich Buch adds, “The IBM System z platform has been at the center of our technology strategy for many years now, offering us unparalleled stability and the exceptional security we need to serve the financial services industry. It also delivers the flexibility we need to work with multiple operating systems, and it was a natural choice to deploy IBM Worklight running on Linux within the System z environment.”

IBM provided comprehensive product and development support, to help ABK-Systeme go to market as quickly as possible. Ulrich Buch elaborates, “When we started our first project, we had only four weeks until the release. The IBM team worked together across brands and technologies to support the implementation of IBM Worklight and also to get our developers up to speed with the new environment – this was critical to the project success.”

IBM Worklight Foundation enables easy management of all aspects of the mobile application development process, including build, test, run and maintenance. Dominik Weitz comments, “Because we can run IBM Worklight Studio on different operating systems - including Linux, Windows and Apple’s OS X - each developer can work on their preferred platform, helping them work to their full potential.”

Maximizing productivity of the development process

By enabling code re-use across multiple platforms, IBM Worklight streamlines the mobile application development process. Using IBM Worklight software saves valuable time, helping ABK-Systeme to accelerate the release of new mobile applications, maintaining the company’s competitive advantage.

“IBM Worklight includes really useful tools – just one example is the simulator that allows us to thoroughly review applications before releasing them.”

— Dominik Weitz, Software Developer,
ABK-Systeme

Ulrich Buch says, “Developing cross-platform mobile apps with IBM Worklight reduces our software maintenance costs. By helping us work more efficiently, the solution enables us to focus on developing new features and cutting development cycles, rather than fixing the same bugs in duplicate code.

“Additionally, in the past, it was difficult to plug in existing web services into mobile apps without compromising security, forcing us to re-do work for different roll-outs. IBM Worklight allows us to integrate web services quickly and securely, so we can work as efficiently as possible without compromising our reputation for industry-leading data protection.”

Dominik Weitz continues, “IBM Worklight includes really useful tools – just one example is the simulator that allows us to thoroughly review applications before releasing them. Including powerful features that simplify testing, such as trying out location-based services, the IBM Worklight solution is proving to be significantly better than other simulators, enabling us to roll out applications for all environments more quickly than ever before.”

Ensuring rock-solid security

ABK-Systeme relies on the broad range of security features provided by IBM Worklight to prevent unauthorized access to data. For example, the solution encrypts cached data and integrates seamlessly with existing authentication systems. Mobile applications can also be disabled remotely through the central management capability, simplifying device administration.

“The combination of IBM Worklight, System z, WebSphere Application Server and DB2 software has provided the ideal platform for our move into the mobile applications space.”

— Ulrich Buch, CTO, ABK-Systeme

Dominik Weitz describes, “The direct update functionality of IBM Worklight helps us enhance security while simplifying application support. It pushes updates to the clients automatically, fixing bugs quickly and effectively, and ensures that all users are on the latest release of an application with little effort from our side.”

IBM Worklight also provides the ability to collect, store and analyze mobile application usage data. This functionality enables ABK-Systeme to discover exactly how applications are being used, and use the data to feed back into the next development cycle, providing a simple product improvement path that directly contributes to user satisfaction.

Ulrich Buch concludes, “The combination of IBM Worklight, System z, WebSphere Application Server and DB2 software has provided the ideal platform for our move into the mobile applications space. The solution has made deploying cross-platform applications much easier, giving us a head start against the competition in bringing secure, reliable mobile applications to our customers.”

For more information

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