

## Altium Creates and Deploys Six Critical Business Applications in Just Four Weeks with Unlimited Edition and the AppExchange platform



### Industry

High-tech software/services

### Geographies

Headquartered in Sydney, Australia, with offices throughout Europe, Asia, and the United States, with about 270 employees worldwide

### Challenges

- ⚡ Implement system capable of scaling during busy periods
- ⚡ Be up and running within four weeks to serve upcoming peak business period
- ⚡ Automate key business processes
- ⚡ Ward off intense competition from larger players
- ⚡ Maximize use of limited technical resources

### Solution

Altium exceeded the original goal of a minimal implementation to create six custom applications, many based on existing **AppExchange** applications. In the process, the company upgraded to **Unlimited Edition** to supercharge its application development.

### Results

- ⚡ Higher levels of availability, performance, scalability, and security
- ⚡ Increased employee productivity through streamlined processes and consistent, intuitive user interfaces
- ⚡ Increased customer satisfaction through improved customer support
- ⚡ Improved allocation of scarce technical resources to focus on high-value, strategic projects
- ⚡ Elimination of infrastructure management and software deployment headaches

“I’m still amazed that we achieved what we did in the time frame. That we were able to create such a comprehensive business platform in such a short amount of time is a testament to our team, to salesforce.com, and to the power of the AppExchange platform.”

— Alan Perkins  
Chief Information Officer

Altium Limited, a leading developer of electronics design software, had just four weeks to get ready for its next peak business period. And although AltiumOne—the company’s existing homegrown system—normally performed adequately, the last peak period showed that it could not scale to meet the company’s increased demand.

With limited technical resources, increased internal competition for those resources, and 270 users around the world depending on the system, Altium looked for an outside solution, evaluating several vendors. None met the high standards of Altium’s own solutions or could address the urgent need to implement the solution, transfer hundreds of thousands of records, and train hundreds of users within four weeks.

Until salesforce.com’s Unlimited Edition and the AppExchange, that is. “At one stage, we looked into installing an ERP (enterprise resource planning) system, and the implementation fee alone was more than \$450,000, with ongoing maintenance fees and upgrades. We simply couldn’t justify spending millions on a system such as Oracle, SAP, or Siebel,” says Alan Perkins, Altium’s chief information officer. “But I discovered that salesforce.com and the AppExchange were philosophically aligned with our business in many ways. It’s a simple yet highly sophisticated platform, and we quickly saw that it could be customized to fit our needs without the pain, cost, and timelines of the traditional solutions we considered.”

### Rapid Development and Deployment with AppExchange and Unlimited Edition

Given the looming deadline, Altium planned a bare-bones implementation to provide limited integration with AltiumOne, to address only the most urgent operational needs. The implementation began in late January 2006, with a projected rollout date of March 5 and a staff of five full-time developers and two employees that helped with the data transfer of around 120,000 active accounts, 190,000 contacts, 300,000 assets, and 200,000 contracts. Within days Perkins and his staff realized they would not just meet their goal but could exceed it by far. “Within about four days into the implementation, we realized we could do much more than we had initially planned,” says Perkins. “I really started to think of AppExchange as a business platform, and I got increasingly excited, ambitious, and confident in what we could do in four weeks.”

In addition to leveraging the power of AppExchange, Altium upgraded to salesforce.com’s Unlimited Edition, to support the company’s application development, deployment, and management capabilities. “Unlimited Edition gave us a Sandbox development environment that really helped in getting this project ready in record time. And the Premier Support representative who became part of our virtual team made sure we got maximum support for our project,” Perkins says.

Perkins credits the rapid deployment of Altium’s business platform to the AppExchange directory—the first marketplace for sharing business applications, which allows salesforce.com customers to take on-demand computing far beyond CRM. For Altium, the directory served as a fountain of ideas and as the springboard for the development of the following six applications that leveraged Altium’s .NET development environment and resources:

### About Altium

Founded in 1985, Altium has a long and proven history as a leader of technology innovation in the electronics design automation (EDA) industry. The company first rose to prominence when it released the first PCB design system developed specifically for the Microsoft Windows operating system, and since then, Altium has continued to develop solutions that are at the forefront of its industry. The company's design tools are a crucial element of some of the world's best-known products spanning a wide range of industries, including telecommunications, aerospace, defense, medicine, consumer electronics, and automotive.

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### For More Information

Contact your account executive to learn how we can help you accelerate your CRM success.

- :: **Quoting** – Altium customized a sales quotes AppExchange application to create printed quotes with multiple product lines and multilingual content, with a layout that conforms to local postal requirements. This application also creates a sales order in Altium's ERP system and routes it to the appropriate warehouse for shipment. The processed order is then fed back into Salesforce so that sales representatives can view the status of customer orders.
- :: **Purchase Orders** – Altium's new purchase order system streamlines purchasing, improves the visibility of expenditures, and includes sophisticated workflow functionality.
- :: **Project Management** – Altium installed and customized the Project and Issue Management AppExchange application to support the company's unique business requirements for tracking complex global projects involving multiple groups and external partners.
- :: **Electronic Component Management** – Using multiple development tools included in AppExchange Builder, this application tracks Altium's inventory of electronic components such as capacitors, resistors, and diodes and maps each component to a series of purchase items from various suppliers as well as to a series of electronic models, such as 2-D printed-circuit-board footprints, 3-D models, and schematic symbols.
- :: **Customer Request & Campaign Management** – Developed with salesforce.com's AJAX toolkit, this application allows customers to request downloads, product orders, support cases, and bookings for events through the company Web site, which is integrated with the system.
- :: **Support Case Management** – Altium used Salesforce's powerful dashboard analytics to provide information to Altium's Global Customer Care department about pending support requests.

### Getting Users On Board

Altium's next challenge was to train 270 users around the world to use an entirely new system in just four weeks. Because face-to-face training was out of the question, the company took advantage of the extensive training materials available on the salesforce.com Web site. Altium also created its own videos to train users in how to best use the customized versions of the applications. “We used the six-minute evaluation demos to introduce staff to the concept of the Salesforce system,” says Perkins. “We also used salesforce.com's training videos and monitored who had viewed what, to make sure everyone was up to speed.”

### The Verdict Is In

Perkins reports that morale has already improved as employees enjoy shorter response times and a consistent, intuitive, Web-based interface. Feedback from across the business has been positive as well.

And, of course, the solution has made life easier for Perkins and his staff. “Hosting the entire solution with salesforce.com cures many of my headaches as a CIO,” says Perkins. “It reduces the stress of keeping our systems up and making sure there's no downtime. It gives us a strong platform for growth and lets us focus our attention on getting our products to market.”

As for the bottom line, Altium also expects to improve productivity by processing leads more quickly and to increase customer satisfaction through better handling of support and customer requests. And for the future, Altium is already working on further customizing the applications to provide additional functionality. The company also plans to publish several of these applications, including its purchase-order and campaign-management systems, on the AppExchange, so that other companies can share in the benefits.

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