

Community Cloud Case Study



Client: Ceres Imaging

Ceres imaging is an aerial spectral imagery company that helps growers optimize their water and fertilizer application. They capture high-resolution multispectral images via low-flying planes and process the images using highly advanced image processing and crop modeling techniques. The images reveal highly accurate, real-time information of the water and nutrient status of every plant in a field. They are based in the San Francisco Bay Area, they serve a diverse base of growers, from California to the U.S. Midwest, to Hawaii and Australia.

Headquarters: Oakland, CA, USA

Industry: Aerial Imagery

Website: www.Ceresimaging.net

Services Provided: Sales Process Optimization, Partner Community, Integration

Salesforce Clouds: Sales Cloud, Community Cloud

Background

Ceres Imaging uses Salesforce for their quoting process and Ceres Works (client internal application) for execution of their orders. They sell services as products and farmers are their primary customers. Their products include chlorophyll measurement, water stress measurement, and tree count, etc.

When sales reps sell these products to customers, they collect crucial customer information like

- ✔ arms and fields the customer owns and would like Ceres to provide information about
- ✔ acreage and crop type
- ✔ KMZ file, an image map with details on location and coordinates of those fields

They send this information manually in the form of orders to their operations team. The Ops team executes the orders by scheduling flights to fly over these fields to take appropriate images.

Challenges:

- ✔ **Redundant manual data entry of quote information and customer information in Salesforce and in Ceres Works.**
 - ⊙ Due to the use Salesforce for forecasting and Ceres Works to manage their business operations.
- ✔ **Operations feels that most of the time they lack sufficient information to execute orders due to following reasons:**
 - ⊙ Disconnect between the two systems – no direct integration between Salesforce and Ceres Works.
 - ⊙ Sales reps often forget to enter required information when they are manually entering order information in Ceres Works.
 - ⊙ Sometimes there is some information that is required to be collected in the sales process itself and the sales reps forget to collect this information from the customer. Example: Operations always requires crop type while scheduling flights because crop type impacts execution plans based on weather conditions.
- ✔ **Along with an internal sales team, they have a network of distributors who sell Ceres's products to farmers but there is no tool for the distributors to enter their order information.**
 - ⊙ Most of the time this information is communicated via emails and spreadsheets and it becomes hard for them to track these orders.
 - ⊙ They realized the need for a platform where distributors can order their products and inquire about order status.
- ✔ **Once they get the orders, Operations must manually schedule flights for each farmer, for each field and later change the schedules if required based on the availability of pilots.**
 - ⊙ They wanted the initial scheduling process to be automated.



Solution:

Process Optimization

- ◉ Wilco Source changed their current data model to capture farmer, farm and field data appropriately to be able to quote information for each field independently.
- ◉ We created visual force pages to allow sales reps to prepare quotes by enabling them to view or collect all the information they need from one place.
- ◉ Wilco Source automated flight scheduling processes using business rules to make it easier for operations.
- ◉ Automated emails were scheduled to be sent out to pilots to provide them with updates on their flight information including the farms they should fly over and image, when to fly, acreage to cover, and aerial coordinates. This reduced coordination work for operations.



Integration

- ◉ To eliminate duplicate efforts and errors in manual data entry, we integrated Salesforce and Ceres Works through APIs so that data flows seamlessly without any delay.

Distributor Community

- ◉ Using Salesforce partner community, we designed a site for their distributors that allowed the distributors to create accounts, contacts, opportunities and submit quotes in Salesforce.
- ◉ The distributors can also inquire about the status of their orders by submitting cases through the community.

Results

- ◉ Wilco Source identified process gaps and aligned their sales team, distributors and operations team to solve problems in their quoting process.
- ◉ Through API integrations we helped users to avoid tedious manual data entry and duplicate efforts.
- ◉ By replacing traditional communication methods with technology solutions (through chatter, automated workflow emails, and communities) we improved the business operations effectiveness.



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