

AESSEAL®

Audacia's collaborative partnership approach future-proofs leading manufacturer's IT system



EXPERIENCE THE EXCEPTIONAL

"Audacia provided us with access to a skilled resource pool that helped us to significantly reduce our time to market."

Stuart Welsh, Head of IT, AESSEAL®

Summary

When leading manufacturer of mechanical seals and support systems, AESSEAL®, realised that sustaining planned growth was creating an urgent need to upgrade its disparate legacy IT systems, it considered recruiting additional IT staff. After reviewing various options it decided to engage Audacia in a collaborative software development partnership. Working with Audacia has enabled the organisation to release its new suite of enterprise software products with a significantly reduced time to market, whilst simplifying system management, improving user experience and supporting change and growth within the business.

QUICK FACTS

Situation: Manufacturer's sustained growth creates urgent need to upgrade IT infrastructure.

Solution: Collaborative partnership redevelops legacy software suite.

Success: New flexible, scalable platform dramatically reduces time to market, improves system management and end user experience and enables continuing growth

Technologies used: Visual Studio Online, ASP.NET MVC, C# and SQL Server

Situation

AESSEAL® is one of the world's leading specialists in the design and manufacture of mechanical seals and support systems. Growing from eight UK based employees in 1979 to 1,700 employees at 230 locations across 104 countries with annual sales of £147 million, AESSEAL®'s IT infrastructure needed to keep pace.

Stuart Welsh, Head of IT at AESSEAL® explains:

"As a result of expansion, we had a large backlog of challenging technical projects to deliver and we were not in a position to do so with our current capacity. As the product lines offered by our business have become significantly more complicated, we have needed to evolve the software platforms that support the sales and maintenance of these products. Ensuring that we could continue to do so was imperative to our growth plans. The consequence of not addressing this challenge would have been lost revenue.

"The core issue was that the business was reliant on a number of disparate legacy systems that were distributed to users with no central management or control. We considered hiring additional staff and managing the projects in-house, however, we decided against this due to cost and time issues relating to recruiting, training, and managing additional employees," Stuart advises.

Solution

Having ruled out employing new team members, Stuart began to look at other options, including outsourcing. He soon realised the potential benefits of working with a partner experienced in delivering bespoke software solutions across multiple sectors. Such a partner would enable AESSEAL® to benchmark its own development processes against other systems in its own industry and to borrow best practice from other organisations across multiple sectors.

AESSEAL® chose to partner with Audacia.

Stuart explains why:

"Initially, we were impressed with Audacia's ability to quickly analyse and understand both our existing business processes and the issues that we were facing. Audacia also demonstrated strong technical knowledge, coupled with an impressive portfolio of previous projects, so we engaged them in a collaborative development partnership, aiming to redesign and redevelop our suite of legacy software applications."

So, how did collaborative development work?

Philip White, Managing Director at Audacia, explains Audacia's collaborative development approach, which builds on Agile methodology:

"We follow an Agile approach, based on the Scrum methodology. After agreeing a high level statement of work and initial backlog we break down each release into two-week iterative development cycles. At the start of each cycle the team reviews feedback and performance relating to the previous cycle, and then moves on to build, test and release items of work allocated to the current cycle. This approach allows us to adapt quickly to feedback and manage new requirements more efficiently, in turn, ensuring the product developed meets the true business requirements cost effectively."

Stuart describes how this worked for AESSEAL®:

"Audacia's team of experts integrated really well with our own development team, working alongside us to refine our existing development processes. The combination of an Agile approach, supported by tools (such as Visual Studio Online, which provided us with clear visibility and progress tracking against all aspects of development, testing, deployment and user feedback throughout the process) made the collaborative development partnership work extremely well," Stuart advises.

"Such an Agile approach ensured ongoing scalability and flexibility. This was imperative to the project due to evolving requirements, continuous feedback from the business and, of course, our plans for future growth," Stuart explains further.

Success

AESSEAL®'s newly developed software suite has surpassed all expectations.

AESSEAL'S RECENTLY UPGRADED SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

Knowledge Database:

A central repository of information relating to chemicals, chemical applications, rotating equipment assets and AESSEAL products.

Site Survey:

An application used to record structural layout of customer assets and installation, inspection and change management history of AESSEAL®'s sealing solutions.

Quick Quote:

A platform used to produce bespoke sales quotations for sealing solutions, based on a virtual product selection and configuration tool.

"The new quotation platform, supporting over £100M p.a. in sales, provides us with the real-time ability to create accurate quotations with practically unlimited combinations of products and product features, saving us time and money and giving us a competitive advantage.

"Aggregating the disparate systems into a suite of ASP.NET MVC component applications (with shared user authentication) has dramatically improved both the system management and, more importantly, the end user experience.

"Working with Audacia has enabled us to benchmark our development processes against other software development operations in the industry and to borrow best practice from other sectors," advises Stuart.

"Overall, Audacia provided us with access to an experienced and skilled resource pool and helped us to significantly reduce our time to market. Investing in such pioneering technology has simplified the whole ordering process for our customers, enabling us to respond quickly to customers' needs - whatever, wherever. The Audacia team demonstrated great commitment in helping us achieve our project goals at all times and has been a highly capable and dedicated partner. I would gladly recommend Audacia to any company looking to collaboratively develop bespoke software solutions," he concludes.

"Working collaboratively with Audacia has been a great success. When we demonstrated the latest iteration of our new software suite at a major sales conference it was received really positively by our internal teams and our board members," explains Stuart.



ABOUT AUDACIA

Audacia Consulting is a Leeds based Microsoft certified partner with an excellent track record of delivering secure, reliable, scalable & cost effective business systems to a wide range of clients across a wide range of sectors.

A bespoke managed software development company, Audacia specialises in developing web-based & mobile applications as well as integrating with existing software & database systems. Audacia provides flexible and scalable access to our team of project managers, business analysts & developers based on fixed-budget or rolling project terms.

ABOUT AESSEAL®

AESSEAL® is a world-leading designer and manufacturer of mechanical seals and support systems. With sales of £147 million, it has grown from eight UK employees in 1979 to 1,700 employees operating from 230 locations in 104 countries today.

AESSEAL® is committed to investing in pioneering technology. Equipping itself to be able to respond to customers' needs, whatever, whenever, is just one example of how this established business continues to challenge industry standards and competitors advances in its mission to become the world's biggest manufacturer of mechanical seals and support systems.