

Case Study

New web solution for tenant screening helps company access new markets

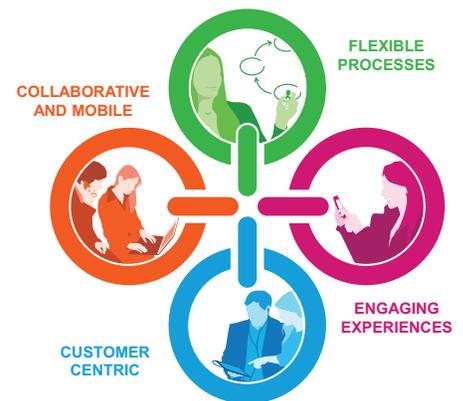
Intuitive technology solution streamlines processes for credit and background checks

Business situation

This global leader in credit information and information management services strives to help enterprises better manage risk and customer relationships. The company also assists consumers in better understanding and managing credit to achieve their financial goals. One particular solution—a tenant-screening tool—was designed to facilitate relationships between landlords and prospective renters. For landlords, the tool provides comprehensive credit and background checks; for tenants, it offers data privacy and online identity verification. For both, the tool delivers improved safety and security.

Yet this financial company's tool had design limitations that were negatively impacting customers:

- **A non-intuitive and complex user experience** was causing users to abandon the online application process and seek other, more user-friendly services.
- **Limited browser support** restricted its availability to some customer segments.
- **Processes required manual IT intervention** to unlock or restore pending applications and recommendations that could cause unwarranted delays in processing.



Work Redesigned: A strategy for seizing new opportunities.

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From an operational perspective, the company also faced challenges with its tenant-screening tool:

- **Fragmented insight into user behavior** made it difficult to leverage data for new business opportunities.
- **Inconsistent search engine optimization** was limiting its market reach.
- **Archaic customer service capabilities** hampered customer service representatives (CSRs) as they were required to access multiple systems in order to support customers.
- **Information security audits** revealed serious threats to the application and customer data that needed to be addressed as part of the solution.

These issues were uncovered when the financial company brought in Avanade to perform an assessment of the tenant-screening tool. As part of the assessment, Avanade also identified initiatives that would help the company achieve its overarching vision—to evolve its technology to IT 2.0 capabilities, and position the organization to mature and expand its product offerings geographically and vertically.

The guiding principle Avanade presented to its customer was this: *This investment is not about deploying technology; it's about enabling users, driving revenue and realizing a return on your investment.* This principle formed the basis for the successful engagement. Avanade helped the company develop a web-based system and practical processes to streamline the customer experience, making it easier for company employees to perform their jobs.

The Work Redesigned Difference:

Enhancing the customer experience, improving workflow, enabling employees, gaining insight into data:

- Potential renters now complete online applications through the easy-to-use, intuitive interface without the need for intervention by customer service staff.
- With the new application process flow, customer service representatives are able to handle service issues more efficiently and autonomously, freeing up their time to focus on more strategic initiatives. Call center volume has dropped and job satisfaction has improved.
- Landlords now have access to improved data consistency and accuracy with which to make informed business decisions and expand offerings.

The inside story: a product vision perspective

Avanade's initial assessment of the company's business unit, and subsequent recommendations, was the starting point for the process and technology transformation. Through ongoing dialogue with company stakeholders, Avanade gained a deep understanding of all aspects and roles involved in developing, supporting, marketing and selling its services—call center agents, product managers, sales people, product marketing and IT staff. As such, Avanade built tremendous credibility with company by approaching the engagement from a *product vision* perspective, rather than from a *technology and rates* standpoint.

The new web solution allows landlords and applicants to securely share information. The new screening tool leverages the Microsoft .NET framework and Service Oriented Architecture on top of a SQL Server relational database. The new solution interfaces with multiple external data sources through standardized Web Service APIs. This architecture allows for the expansion of services and business functions so that the company can easily extend the application's capabilities into other industries. In addition, common business rules are centralized into a common code library while business rules specific to the rental industry are separated into services modules, allowing for increased extensibility and maintainability of the solution.

The team leveraged Avanade Connected Methods, a proven phase-based delivery methodology to bring the project to completion:

- **Local presence, collaborative approach.** Avanade's Denver-based team members led the initiative and coordinated offshore resources, such as the application development team in India and the experience design teams in Seattle and Buenos Aires. The blend of onshore and offshore resources enabled Avanade to keep the project on track throughout the plan, analyze, design, test and deploy phases.
- **Modernizing technology and processes.** The tenant screening solution integrated a newer technology platform that would enable the company to have better reliability, responsiveness, scalability and security. Now that the new application and redesigned processes are in play, the company is well positioned to execute on its product roadmap and realize projected revenue.
- **Transferring knowledge for ongoing development.** In addition to delivering valuable expertise for application development and website design, Avanade transferred knowledge to company IT employees, empowering them to continue with technology architecture development in house.

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The company's redesigned processes and replicable web-based application allow it to explore new markets and achieve its revenue targets. With the technology foundation built by Avanade, the company can continue on its innovation roadmap, including expansion of mobile capabilities.

Results delivered: Interactive solution keeps customers engaged, streamlines business processes, and equips employees to deliver superior customer service

With Avanade's help, the company has replaced its legacy system with a suite of integrated modern and scalable web applications for the tenant screening business unit. Both the enterprise and its customers are reaping the benefits of the new solution:

- **Enhanced customer experience.**

The new look and feel of the simple, streamlined system makes it easy and intuitive for customers to complete applications; dramatically decreasing drop-outs and resulting in a higher number of business opportunities for the company.

- **Increased productivity of CSRs.**

With all information housed in one system, CSRs are able to resolve customer issues much more efficiently. Formerly, CSRs had to open IT tickets to gain access to additional resources; now they are able to support themselves without IT involvement. The new application allows the CSR team to handle a larger number of customers without a headcount increase.



- **Improved employee satisfaction.**

The user interface developed by Avanade's Business Analyst and Experience Design team makes it easier for CSRs to satisfy customer requests. The company's CSRs are delighted with the new application.

- **Drive revenue opportunities and grow market share.**

Expanded browser capabilities, deployment of Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and consumer monitoring has facilitated growth in untapped and existing market segments.

- **Improved security.** Avanade helped the company offload the storage of pay card identity (PCI) data, thereby greatly reducing its security footprint. The new application easily passed a security and penetration test; meeting or exceeding all of the company's security guidelines and policies.

The company plans to extend the tenant screening application's mobile capabilities to support its product and market expansion goals—and Avanade's technology solution makes that entirely achievable.

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About the company

This customer is a global leader in credit information and information management services. It has worked with businesses and consumers to gather, analyze and deliver the critical information needed to build strong economies throughout the world. It maintains credit histories on more than 500 million consumers around the globe, helping them achieve their financial goals. The company's global services include Credit Reporting, Automotive Information Services, Analytic and Decisioning Services, Commercial Services, and Consumer Services.



About Avanade

Avanade helps customers realize results in a digital world through business technology solutions and managed services that combine insight, innovation and expertise focused on Microsoft® technologies. Our people have helped thousands of organizations in all industries improve business agility, employee productivity and customer loyalty. Avanade combines the collective business, technical and industry expertise of its worldwide network of experts with the rigor of an industrialized delivery model to provide high quality solutions using proven and emerging technologies with flexible deployment models—on premises, cloud-based or outsourced. Avanade, which is majority owned by Accenture, was founded in 2000 by Accenture LLP and Microsoft Corporation and has 21,000 professionals in more than 20 countries. Additional information can be found at www.avanade.com.

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