Tech startup simplifies field inspection and asset maintenance for global enterprises and utilities

Case Study
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At Connixt, our goal is to help utilities, the transit sector, and construction firms integrate their field crew, suppliers, contractors, and assets into a cohesive structure that fosters a smooth-running enterprise. And we make it as easy as downloading an app. Our cloud-based mobile enterprise suite includes solutions that convert an organization's paper-based field inspections and work orders to fully digital processes. Users can report status and location and manage maintenance requests and tasks, timesheets, and more. These solutions also provide instant visibility into inventory and connections to crew, contractors and suppliers across the globe in minutes, no matter what their internal systems or languages. All they need is a standard smartphone or tablet.

> "Customers initially ask, 'How soon can you deploy the Connixt solution? How many months? How many years?' When we reply that they can see the first results within 48 hours, they are completely amazed."
> - G. Satish, Cofounder and CEO, Connixt

Adopting the cloud to save time and money

What sets Connixt apart from other providers is simplicity and time to value. Other companies that follow traditional deployment methods must install hardware and software behind the firewall and configure it to interoperate with the local IT environment and internal network. The cost of implementing enterprise solutions as comprehensive as ours using this conventional approach would be phenomenal. On top of that, only one company would be using it. It's not multitenant within the firewall. The organization has to open its network to the mobile apps that need to communicate with it. The company might also need three or four servers, all with software that needs to be managed and updated.

Connixt takes a completely different approach. We take advantage of the cloud. Customers open their web services to access our cloud-based solutions. That's all. It's a noninvasive process. They can leave their environment unchanged. Our solutions interoperate with whatever back-end systems they have. And our open enterprise architecture, which operates almost entirely within the Microsoft Azure cloud, is a huge part of the reason that Connixt solutions are successful for our customers. It's cost-effective for them and for us. Because our solutions are multitenant, we use the same set of servers, but we partition the data so that a customer can access only their own data. We capitalize three or four servers to satisfy the needs of four or five different customers. The savings in infrastructure investment is enormous.

Choosing a cloud provider that supports the way we work

Before choosing our cloud provider, of the providers we evaluated, Azure virtually selected itself. The first time we brought up virtual machines in Azure, it took just 20 minutes. It was so simple. Plus, our team has experience with Microsoft technologies, and we have great confidence in them. Examples include Microsoft SQL Server, Office 365, solutions from Xamarin (a Microsoft-owned company) to deliver mobile apps, and the open-source web application framework ASP.NET MVC (developed by Microsoft).

Connixt uses open-source technologies during product development, and Azure is ideal for bringing together combinations of Microsoft and open-source tools in highly productive ways. Specifically, we use Knockout.js, MVVM Light, and Chart.js, along with JSON.NET for web service communications. We import open-source technologies into Microsoft Visual Studio. The .NET Framework is also a great choice for us

because there are so many tools that are comparable with .NET technologies. This is another reason we opted to go with Microsoft. In our opinion, the cost of product development is minimized by a Microsoft platform because it has a great set of capabilities in its own right but also supports the open-source technologies we depend on. And the relevant skills are widely available.

Connixt is now able to deliver innovative cloud-mobile solutions that serve large and small customers alike, quickly and cost-effectively. With pay-as-you-go subscription pricing, we can scale to meet (and generate) high demand, effectively without limit. We gain all the security benefits of Azure that, combined with the prestige of Microsoft, gives our customers confidence. And when we have technical issues, Microsoft is quick to help us. In several instances, Connixt has been the first time a customer has adopted a solution that runs in the cloud – and this includes some of the largest players in their industry as well. Many of them operate in industries that are particularly sensitive about their data in the cloud – and most of their questions are resolved fairly easily with support from the Azure team.

> "Our open enterprise architecture and configurable approach, which operates almost entirely within the Microsoft Azure cloud, is a huge part of the reason that Connixt solutions are successful for our customers."
> - Prabu Ekambaram, Cofounder and CTO, Connixt

From the perspective of users, all they see is the Connixt app. They download and run it—as simple as that. Perhaps the best benefits that customers gain is rapid adoption and the high transaction volumes that Azure makes possible. That speaks to the ease of deployment and the intuitive capabilities of our products. In this way, we have been able to achieve our initial vision effectively. For example, over and over, we hear the same question. Customers initially ask, "How soon can you deploy the Connixt solution? How many months? How many years?" When we reply that they can see the first results within 48 hours, they are completely amazed. One utility customer asked if they could add additional users in anticipation of a hurricane that was expected to go through their service territory – we accomplished the temporary provisioning within minutes for the required period.

The ability of Connixt to demonstrate real benefits within such a short time is both practically and emotionally rewarding to us.