



Gold Partner Scheme

FAIRS implement gateway to business growth

in2itive's web-enabling and portal service enables Fairs to deliver its IFA software to customers worldwide over the web

Fairs plc (Financial And Investment Related Software), founded in 1984, develops and supplies customer relationship and investment management software to independent financial advisors (IFAs) around the world.

Fairs' software product, Fairs Manager, allows independent financial advisors to target, acquire and retain profitable customers by determining what products are best suited to their particular needs, along with providing better sales and support services.

Fairs Manager is a sophisticated back office administration system designed specifically for IFAs and supports all aspects of client administration, business placing, commission handling and portfolio management for the life, pensions, investment and mortgage industries.

Fairs considered web-enabling the core software and secure client data so as to be accessible worldwide from any PC as being key to growing its business - achieving this without re-engineering was a major concern. An additional objective was to provide its customers the best software and hardware capability without the need for expensive infrastructure investment.

Fairs looked at a number of options to develop a web-enabled product and to host an Application Service Provider (ASP) version of its software, but chose the Gold Partner and Bespoke Portal solution from in2itive as it was the only company that could resolve their concerns and meet their demanding requirements quickly and efficiently.

in2itive's Gold Partner web-enabling service meant that there was no need for Fairs to re-engineer its software in order to make it available over the web. This dramatically cut the time from conception to deployment and helped to minimise implementation costs.

in2itive was also the only company that was prepared to demonstrate that it could do what it said it could – have a fully functioning portal with the Fairs Manager software running in seven days. **Dr. Czes Kosniowski, managing director of Fairs**, explained: “Many people promise the earth with IT implementations, and we thought that in2itive’s promises of getting a portal to deliver Fairs Manager in under two weeks was ambitious. in2itive delivered exactly what was promised and ahead of time.



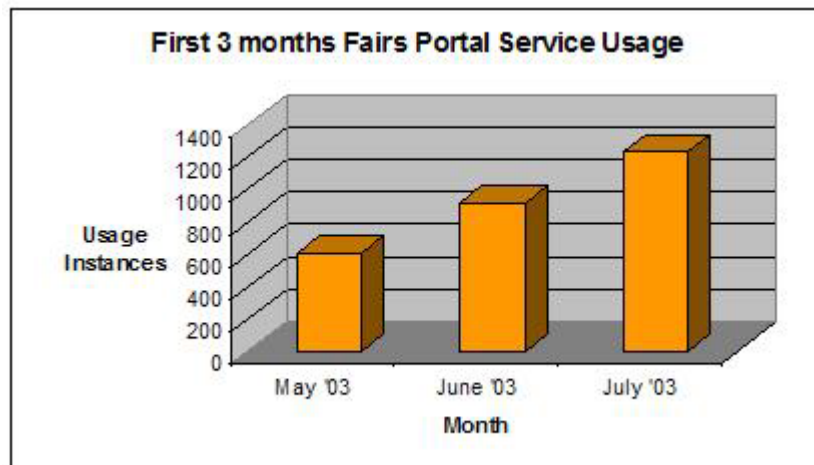
The FAIRS' Portal secure login screen

“in2itive was prepared to demonstrate its product without question, and without any initial capital outlay on our part, which showed that it believed in its own products.”

Challenges

One of the major challenges that the ASP model was intended to combat was that many of Fairs' customers have several remotely dispersed offices, some in different countries and each with a separate client database. Previously, IFAs and sales representatives had to transfer details about clients and transactions back to the parent offices, where the records are updated on one database and exported to the others so that the data was consistent across the company. The update process typically happened daily and had the potential to cause serious synchronisation and consolidation problems.

The Gold Partner web-enabling service and Bespoke Portal enables Fairs to overcome the problematic data synchronisation and consolidation issues. Fairs now provide a facility where their customer's databases are centralised on in2itive's servers with secure, managed access to Fairs Manager being gained across the web. The Fairs Manager software runs within the browser on the IFA's PC, allowing users to interact with all of the appropriate company's data from anywhere in the world.



The confidential nature of the information IFAs hold about their clients requires formal segregation of the data. The in2itive portal service provides comprehensive features for user administration, secure access control, data segregation, encryption and backup and, ensures each client has an independent database - this is different to many other ASP models. It ensures that only those with the appropriate user profile and authority have access to their specific data.

in2itive provides the highest levels of both data and physical security. It also mirrors the data and provides remote backup services, giving Fairs' customers the ability to continue operating even in the event of a fire or flood at their local offices.

Investing in hardware and hosting the software in-house can prove costly and requires dedicated teams to support the systems. Other companies said that they could offer the ability to access Fairs' software over the web, but could not offer the infrastructure, security and support that was available with the in2itive portal solution.

"You sometimes find that once you've signed on the dotted line you never hear from the company again. in2itive has a dedicated account manager and technical support team who are able to deal with any problems or questions quickly and efficiently," explained **Dr. Kosnioski**.

in2itive's role as ASP also means that Fairs can offer its customers all of the benefits of Fairs Manager over the web and focus on serving the needs of its customers, rather than concerning itself with infrastructure and redevelopment issues.

"We can now offer our clients our specialist software across the web, which has put us way ahead of our competition."

Fast and straightforward ROI

"By offering access to its products via the web, Fairs can reach more customers, whilst offering its current customers the choice of how they use the software," added **Jeff Lenton, managing director of in2itive**. "Delivering applications over the web is more than just a trend – it's becoming a "must have" capability. By offering a rapid and cost effective method for web-enabling, our service allows companies to web-enable existing software and deliver it to their customers in less than 48 hours.

"All of our customers are surprised by the speed at which we carry out the process and deliver their products back to them on an evaluation portal. However, just because we can deliver quickly, this doesn't mean that the technology is basic, far from it – the in2itive technology is the result of a 2 year, £3 million market research and product development programme."

Within the first month of operation, Fairs created new sales, signing-up several smaller IFAs who simply wouldn't have been Fairs customers because of their size, lack of IT infrastructure required for the traditional server/LAN based product or simply not wanting to make a large investment. The Fairs portal enables smaller IFAs to enjoy all of the features and benefits of a market-leading product with little investment - providing Fairs with a new exciting revenue stream in a tough marketplace.

"Portals have received at best, lukewarm press, typically from companies that have invested hundreds of thousands of pounds only to see usage and user interest wane because their portal is little more than a corporate mouthpiece. With relatively small investment, Fairs have used in2itive's combined web-enabling and portal service to show the other side of the coin. Fairs deliver credible benefits for both for themselves and their customers - clearly demonstrating to companies large and small, just how in2itives' services really create tangible business advantage." added **Lenton**.

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