



Current Motor gets its all-electric Super Scooter to market six months faster



Customer profile



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|-----------|--|
| Company | Current Motor Company, Inc. |
| Industry | Automotive |
| Country | United States |
| Employees | 12 |
| Web site | currentmotor.com |

Challenge

To put its all-electric Super Scooter on the road and prepare to scale the company for its projected rapid growth, start-up venture Current Motor needed to choose a strategic vendor.

Solution

Dell formed a team to put the services, hardware and software together with licensed Dell technology to integrate Current Motor's onboard computer with its digital dash, to ship rider data to the cloud to be analyzed to engineer better products, and to provide better customer support and integration with Salesforce ServiceCloud software.

Benefits

- Six-fold faster integration of Salesforce.com software
- Digital dashboard was brought to market six months faster with Dell's help
- Ability to grow faster with Dell Financial Services lease which enabled company to save capital for marketing and R&D

Application areas

- Cloud Computing
- Enterprise Mobility Devices
- Financial services
- Green Efficiency
- Mobility
- Services

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Lauren Flanagan, Executive Chairman, Current Motor

The launch of a new and innovative product in the motorcycle industry, manufactured in the United States, is a cause for celebration. Current Motor Company, Inc (Current Motor) is the new venture and its product is an electric Super Scooter with a top speed of 65 miles per hour and a range of 50 miles between recharges.

Based in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the venture has already generated new manufacturing jobs in the state, and Current Motor can benefit from existing automotive talent. "I really loved the idea of having a company like this in Michigan because of all the EV technology convergence here," says Lauren Flanagan, who heads up the company as executive chairman. "Battery companies are coming to Michigan to serve the increased electrification of the big auto makers, there are lots of tier 1 suppliers and large flex manufacturers and very importantly, we have a trained and available workforce."

Sending rider information via the cloud

The Current Motor Super Scooter features a digital dash built with onboard WiFi using licensed Dell technology. It displays all the information that the rider needs to see about performance. To improve the product, its marketing and servicing, the Dell solution relays rider information to Current Motor via the cloud. The rider information is analyzed to reveal rider preferences and bike performance. "Owners can get GPS navigation, and quickly connect to people and places they seek using Facebook, Foursquare, Yelp, Twitter and other geo-social apps," says Flanagan. "But we don't distract them when they're driving."

Customers design their own vehicles online and each one is manufactured to order by leading flex manufacturer, Dakota Integrated Systems, which is based in Holt, Michigan and serves GM, Ford and Chrysler. The Salesforce

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Technology at work

Services

Dell™ Services
– Architecture, Implementation, Integration, Training and 24x7 support

Dell Financial Services
– 3 year replacement lease, 3 year warranty

Hardware

Licensed Dell technology for digital dash

Dell EqualLogic™ PS4100E iSCSI SAN storage

Dell Force10 switches

Dell Latitude™ E6520 and Dell XPS 13 Ultrabook laptops

Dell Latitude ST tablet

Dell OptiPlex™ 790 desktops

Dell PowerEdge™ R715 servers

Dell PowerEdge R415 servers

Dell Precision™ T3500 workstations

Polycom phones

Software

Dell Boomi software

Fonality® call center software

Fonality VoIP system

Microsoft® Exchange Server

Microsoft Hyper-V® 2008 R2

Microsoft Office

Microsoft SQL Server®

Microsoft System Center

Salesforce Enterprise licenses for SalesCloud, ServiceCloud software softphones

Windows® 2008 R2 server



customer relationship management system begins collecting information from each contact with the customer as well as all the manufacturing, service and performance information so that Current Motor can anticipate customer needs, and service agents have a granular view into the bike's components, down to rider data, part and batch numbers to aid in fast diagnoses and fixes.

Next stop, Brazil

This Current Motor concept has taken off like a rocket. In addition to the existing market for green vehicles, demand could increase when gas prices are soaring. Also, markets outside the United States might even be larger. Brazil, for instance, has traffic and pollution problems that make an electric scooter very attractive. Dell is using its sales contacts to help Current Motor market in Brazil, where ten times as many motorcycles and scooters are sold, and twice as many people buy computers as in the United States, and Dell does big business.

Flanagan saw the Current Motor prototype and was sold on the concept. A former software entrepreneur who turned investor, she has invested in more than 30 companies over the past seven years. Flanagan is managing partner of BELLE Capital LP, an early stage angel fund that invests in women-led companies in Michigan and the Midwest.

"Current Motor was founded by two ex-Ford engineers, John Harding and Erik Kauppi," says Flanagan. "When I met them nearly two years ago, they had grown to 7 guys in a garage and a rough prototype. I was the first professional investor to put money in the project and helped them get convertible debt from the State of Michigan and from Bob Lutz,

the former vice chairman of GM and considered the father of the Chevy Volt," adds Flanagan, "My fund, BELLE Capital LP, then came in as the lead investor in Current Motor's \$2.3 million Series A financing."

Building the A-team

To transform Current Motor from R&D lab to commercial operation, the company needed to add team members with supply chain, manufacturing, operations, marketing, sales and finance expertise. "BELLE Capital is going to put an A-team around you," Flanagan told the founders. The company would have to add at least one woman to its board and executive team in order to be financed by BELLE. Flanagan took a position as executive chairman. She recruited Marie Klopff, a supply chain expert and BELLE LP venture partner to be president.

To make sure production could scale and to attract future multimillion dollar investments, Flanagan turned to Andra Rush, a limited partner in BELLE Capital and owner of Dakkota Integrated Systems, a leading automotive flex manufacturer that has worked for GM, Ford, Chrysler and Toyota. Dakkota is a joint venture between Rush Group and Magna International, one of North America's largest automotive parts manufacturers and Canada's largest company. Rush agreed to manufacture the Current Motor electric Super Scooter and to manage the supply chain. "Few electric motorcycle manufacturing operations have the ability to scale globally and the depth of financial backing that Dakkota provides," says Flanagan. Rush was so enthusiastic about the project that she made an additional equity investment in Current Motor through BELLE Capital's Side Fund and joined the Board of Directors.

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Current Motor still needed to choose a strategic vendor for digital technology for the dashboard and integration with Salesforce customer relationship management software, as well as cloud services and applications to develop rider profiles and send them to the company for analysis. It also needed an IT infrastructure for its new headquarters.

Sixfold faster integration with Salesforce.com

These pieces came together when Dell brought its Women's Entrepreneur Network together in Rio de Janeiro. "I was so impressed with what Dell was doing for women entrepreneurs that when I came back to Current Motor, I said hey, we're going to go all Dell," says Flanagan. "Dell put together a terrific team. I think we had 12 or 15 people on our team at different times who were helping us put together the IT infrastructure, the cloud services and then everything we were doing for the bike and the rider. The IT implementation and integration with Salesforce software and the cloud were just unbelievably fast. The Dell team got done in 30 days what I would have expected to be a six-month engagement. We don't need to hire IT personnel. We just call Dell and get 24x7 support."

To prepare Current Motor's new headquarters for expected rapid

growth, Dell IT professionals installed highly scalable Dell PowerEdge servers virtualized with Microsoft Hyper-V 2008 R2 server and 7 terabytes of Dell EqualLogic PS4100E storage inside a self-contained, "data center" in a rack connected with Dell Force10 SAN switches. The servers run on Windows 2008 R2 server with Microsoft System Center for management across the cloud. Employees use Dell client desktops, laptops and tablet computers. A VoIP server and call center software are integrated with Salesforce, Polycom and softphones, and linked to e-mail as well. Dell Cloud services professionals provided a premier implementation of ServiceCloud and SalesCloud and single sign on (SSO) assistance for Current Motor's e-commerce site and smartphone apps. Next up will be Dell Boomi integration with Current Motor's manufacturing partner.

The final piece was financing, and Dell provided that as well. A Dell entrepreneur specialist who was working with Flanagan reached out to Dell Financial Services which in turn put together a lease package for Current Motor at a very attractive rate. "We didn't have to use our Series A capital to buy IT infrastructure or cloud services," says Flanagan. "Thanks to Dell Financial Services we can use our capital for sales, marketing and R&D. We can grow faster this way."

Ready to go in one year

It has been nearly two years since Flanagan came upon the seven engineers in the garage, and just one year since BELLE Capital took control of Current Motor and started putting together the A-team and her strategic partnerships. The Current Motor Super Scooters are shipping as of this writing.

A major part of Flanagan's vision is to build out a network of successful women entrepreneurs, and Dell is helping her do just that. Beyond that, she feels that the services that Dell provided to Current Motor could be replicated for many small businesses and entrepreneurs, male or female, to help them realize their dreams faster.

"Our country needs the ingenuity, innovations, job creation and solution creation of these early-stage companies and entrepreneurs, but there's a massive capital gap between what they need and what they can get," Flanagan says. "Finding capital-efficient technical solutions that speed time to market while providing scale and leverage is the holy grail for entrepreneurs. Dell's solutions are exactly what early stage companies need to jumpstart our country out of its malaise and invigorate our economy. Dell products, services and financing instruments can really make a difference."

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