Symphony Services helped a UK-based leading ISV specializing in SharePoint Solutions to develop business-ready web parts for MS SharePoint to enhance efficiency and collaboration of business-users.

The Client

The client is a UK-based, leading provider of SharePoint 2003 – 2007 (MOSS 2007), Microsoft.Net and other technologies for businesses and Information Management solutions for both the public and private sector. They help businesses worldwide to achieve the best of Microsoft Office Business Application implementation as per the need of the business.

The Challenges

The client had vast SharePoint knowledge and first-hand market information of the end-customers' need. Hence, the client found a business opportunity to develop a series of reusable SharePoint web parts that will enhance the SharePoint-user experience and help organizations achieve their business goals. The reusable SharePoint web parts include:

- Utility to dynamically generate Organization Tree structure based on the company hierarchy
- Utility to create user-defined custom views of the organization chart based on employee or department
- Utility with in-built search option within the chart
- Utility with option to manage employees and set employee preference
- Well-defined structure for extensive license management of the product (web parts)

However, the client preferred to reduce R&D TCO by not investing in building and maintaining an in-house development team.

The Solution

Symphony setup a Global Operations Centre (GOC) with a 6-member experienced team. A steering committee comprising of Product Manager (Customer) and Project Manager (Symphony) provided management oversight, reviews,

Product Development
New Product Development

Functional Domain
Enterprise Collaboration

Platform
MS SharePoint

Engagement Key Points
- Project duration – Started in Jan 2009 and still ongoing
- Ramp Up Time from SOW sign off – 2 Weeks
- Team composition: 1 Project Manager, 4 Software Engineers and 1 Software Test Engineer
- SDLC: Agile
- Release Cycle – sprint iterations every two-three weeks accompanied by major releases every 4 weeks

Technology and Tools Used
- Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007 (MOSS)
- .NET Framework 2.0/3.0/3.5
- VB.NET
- C#
- Ajax
- WSS 3.0
- Microsoft Active Directory or XML store
- IIS / IIScript9.0
- Messenger / Communicator

Major Product Features of the Web Parts
- Enhances office productivity by enabling communication of operational information across the business
- User-friendly and easy to install

Web part features include:
- Localization of the chart
- User defined custom views, styles and Employee node information   like name, department, designation, phone number, etc
- User based Security
- Search within the displayed chart
- Expand and collapse of information nodes

control and guidance.

The solution to the client included designing and developing a series of web parts on .NET Framework 2.0 as an extension for Microsoft Office SharePoint Server (MOSS) 2007, thus laying foundation for open architecture and ensuring compatibility with Windows SharePoint Server 3.0. The custom SharePoint web parts include:

- **Organization Chart**: The organization chart enables end-users to create and manage different views of the organizational structure, search people quickly and easily, check availability of other members and much more. It generates organizational and departmental charts by pulling information from user profile. End-users have access to the Organization Chart based on appropriate user roles.
- **Staff Directory:** This web part allows organizations to publish a traditional staff directory. Its integration with Active Directory results in dynamic update of user information in the chart when there is an update in the Active Directory. Integration of this web part with Microsoft Exchange Server provides online presence indicators allowing users to see when staff members are online and/or available.
- **Meeting Planner**: This web part facilitates users to schedule meetings, videoconference, teleconference or online meeting when people are attending from locations in differing times zones.
- **Blog-Roll**: This web part collects blog posts from multiple SharePoint blogs and displays them in a single location thereby enabling the enterprise to promote blogs.
- **Location Map**: This web part allows users to add an Aerial or Road Map to their SharePoint site using the Microsoft Bing Maps with ease.

Symphony incorporated a smart licensing structure of the web parts to integrate with Microsoft SharePoint and tightly couple with all the web parts to provide a secure and simplified license management.

The Benefits

Symphony's rich MS SharePoint expertise and product engineering skills achieved the following benefits for the client:
- Helped reduce development cost / time
- Helped broaden the client's range of product offerings on SharePoint
- Outsourcing enabled the client to remain focused on their core business growth and speed market release