

HOW AKIOMA SOFTWARE MAKES PROGRESS



COMPLEXITY

AKIOMA enables a streamlined, accurate quoting process regardless of proposed project size. In contrast to most CRM systems, which help companies with quotations containing a handful of products and transactions stages, AKIOMA allows its clients to quote and deliver proposals with thousands of sub-orders, interdependencies and contingencies. The clients of AKIOMA Software are masters of complexity within complexity, businesses that sell complex products and services in unique, multi-step deals. Clients include manufactures of custom-engineered equipment and factory management systems, with typical deals in the millions of dollars. Each client has its own nuanced, detailed sales process and product parameters, but AKIOMA is designed for cost-effective and efficient handling of virtually any product and order scenario. AKIOMA software has its rules. The client has theirs. Both tend to be extensively customized for each instance. AKIOMA makes easy work of complexity.



CHALLENGE

Enabling users to generate accurate quotes for highly complex products and services.

SOLUTION

Specialized CRM application built on Progress OpenEdge, leveraging OpenEdge BPM and Corticon to enable dynamic BPM and implement flexible application rules

BENEFIT

Faster time-to-market; Freedom for both IT and business users to implement and change rules, without waiting for new editions of software.

The AKIOMA application, which can be deployed in either on-premise or cloud configurations, is comprised of three core capabilities:

1. **CRM** — Manages contacts, customer relationships, and pipeline.
2. **Product Management** — Defines products and services in a branching tree-structured bill of materials that is comparable to ERP, but from a sales, rather than manufacturing perspective. AKIOMA product management doesn't count every screw, instead showing images and explanatory text.
3. **Offer Creation** — Enables the creation of the offer. Salespeople can use pre-defined product elements, dragging and dropping them to build the offer. AKIOMA checks to see if any elements are missing or in conflict. For example, the application will send an alert if a salesperson drops a product element designed for 110V / 60Hz (US) electricity when the quote is for a European customer that is on a 230V / 50Hz grid. The application can also be set to replace incorrect elements automatically.

FUSING PROGRESS CORTICON WITH PROGRESS OPENEDGE FOR CLIENT ROI

AKIOMA is built on Progress OpenEdge, but customer-defined rules are managed in Progress Corticon. This fusion of Corticon and OpenEdge serves an important architectural purpose. Every AKIOMA customer has its own customization, which is often quite extensive. Implementing the customization by splitting the underlying application from customer-specific rules makes the software release compatible. AKIOMA can update customers to new versions of AKIOMA, as well as OpenEdge, without having an impact on their customization because the rules are outside of the app.

Having just one set of source code makes life easier for both AKIOMA and its customers. Corticon liberates software developers from implementing business decisions, a benefit to the customer in terms of cost, flexibility and speed. Business people can implement simple rules themselves using Corticon. "There is nothing you can't do with Progress Corticon," said

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Managing Director
AKIOMA Software*

“Mike Liewehr, Development Manager at AKIOMA. “It’s as powerful as a full program language.” For complex rules, however, an organization will need someone who is trained in Corticon and works regularly with the tool.

AKIOMA’s client, Lucas-Nülle (<http://www.lucas-nuelle.com/>), showcases the potential of the Corticon-OpenEdge fusion. Lucas-Nülle which sells large-scale, customized educational products, has three levels of quote approval in its sales organization. AKIOMA’s customization for Lucas-Nülle embodies this logic, routing proposals for approval by the salesperson, the team leader or a senior manager, based on 15 interdependent rules. All other things being equal, a discount over a specified level prompts a team leader approval, while a higher discount threshold triggers senior manager involvement. With Corticon, Lucas-Nülle can change the discount levels, as well as the supporting rules, without having to touch any code. This capability frees Lucas-Nülle from the challenge of having business managers explain rules and logic to developers, who in turn would have to customize the application. Corticon is a big money and time saver.

The OpenEdge BPM module can also access rules in Corticon. For example, if a team leader approval is triggered by rules in Corticon, this event will start the “team leader approval” business process as it is orchestrated in BPM. In effect, Corticon enables dynamic BPM. Based on rules, different processes can be invoked. Processes need not be linear or rigid. With Corticon integrated with OpenEdge, a process can contain steps that invoke rules. Based on the rule’s outcome, the process can branch in any number of directions. The rules and process interact for dynamic process flows based on variable business factors.

THE PROGRESS CHOICE: FASTER TIME-TO-MARKET PERIOD.

The choice of Progress Software gives AKIOMA a double-barreled time advantage. “The company’s developers are highly productive on Progress OpenEdge.” “AKIOMA is a complex app with a lot of logic. OpenEdge for the app and database are five times more productive for us than Java or .NET alternatives,” said Mike Liewehr, Managing Director at AKIOMA. “We know this because we use Java for our integration projects and we can compare.”

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Managing Director
AKIOMA Software*

Corticon further accelerates the go-to-market cycle by speeding up the implementation of rules. Dynamic BPM adds flexibility to the customization process, which can shorten time-to-market. Also, by separating the rules from the application, AKIOMA does not have to wait for a new release of the application to implement Corticon.

DISCOVERING NEW BENEFITS AS CORTICON IS ROLLED OUT

As AKIOMA gains more experience with Corticon, it is seeing new benefits to its use. For instance, Corticon automatically documents its rules. That documentation can be used when Corticon is integrated in the OpenEdge application. Corticon can tell the customer why a given decision has been made. In some processes, AKIOMA stores the documentation persistently so the customer can go back and see what has triggered different rules, such as the causes of discounts or terms. AKIOMA has also found out that when they enhance rules, they can test them extensively before they go into production. Once a rules test case has been created, new rules can be added to it for retesting. Corticon testing enables AKIOMA to test how all old rules will be affected by the introduction of just one new or modified rule.

CONTINUING TO MINE COMPLEXITY TO ACHIEVE SIMPLICITY

AKIOMA is in the early stages of bringing Corticon fully into its software offering. Already, the addition has proven to be a source of advantage, though the potential for even more future breakthroughs is quite exciting. AKIOMA is essentially in the business of simplifying complexity. Corticon and OpenEdge working together give AKIOMA virtually unlimited opportunities to help their clients streamline intricate, labor intensive processes. Progress Software enables AKIOMA to succeed by mining complexity to achieve simplicity.

“We are very impressed with AKIOMA. Since we further automated our offer processes with their business rules and BPM modules, we saved resources, sped up the quotation process significantly and reduced errors.”

*Mike Liewehr
Managing Director
AKIOMA Software*

ABOUT OPENEDGE

Progress® OpenEdge® is the leading platform for simplifying and streamlining the development, integration and management of global business applications for fast time-to-market. With the Progress OpenEdge product, you can develop dynamic solutions that incorporate business process and integration capabilities securely across multiple platforms and devices. Whether you deploy on-premise, on a mobile device, or in the Cloud, the Progress OpenEdge application offers a single integrated platform that is 40% more productive and provides a 30% cost savings versus the competition. Over 47,000 businesses in more than 175 countries run on the Progress OpenEdge platform. For more information, please visit www.progress.com/openedge.



PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or on any Cloud, on any platform and on any device with minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

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