



## Desktop Publishing Giant Creates Innovative Web- Based Service for Small-Business

### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Professional services—  
Software engineering

### Customer Profile

Quark is a leading provider of publishing software solutions for customers of all sizes and types, including professional designers, large organizations, and small and midsize businesses. The company is based in Denver, Colorado.

### Business Situation

Quark wanted to provide small and midsize businesses with an easy-to-use, affordable publishing platform that combines the best of locally installed software and Web services.

### Solution

Quark chose the Windows® Azure™ platform and Microsoft® development tools to create Quark Promote, a complete publishing solution for small and midsize businesses.

### Benefits

- Dynamic platform for innovation
- Efficient , cost-effective approach
- Financially beneficial to local printers and customers

“With the Windows Azure platform, we not only can deliver the kind of innovative solution that we want for the business, but also develop it rapidly and easily.”

Ronnie Thompson, Senior Vice President of Engineering, Quark

Two decades ago, Quark changed the course of traditional publishing applications with its [QuarkXPress®](#) desktop publishing software. Today, the company provides publishing and commercial printing solutions to customers around the world across multiple channels. To reach more customers in the small-to-midsize business market, Quark wanted to offer a service combining the flexibility of Web-based computing and the richness of PC-based software. It used the Windows® Azure™ platform and Microsoft® development tools to create Quark Promote, a service in which customers use professional design templates to create custom marketing materials that can be picked up at a local printer or received by mail. The service lets Quark tap into the Web-to-print market, helps its business partners increase revenues, and provides customers with an easy, affordable way to create high-quality marketing materials.

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Stephan Friedl, Chief Software Architect,  
Quark

### Situation

Quark is one of the best-known names in desktop publishing. Its flagship product, QuarkXPress, has helped to define the industry over a span of nearly 30 years. The Denver, Colorado-based company has more than 3 million customers in 160 countries using its products for tasks such as page layout, color control, and typography to produce many different kinds of publications, from magazines and brochures to newsletters and marketing materials.

The company is well established in large enterprise operations across a range of industries, such as advertising agencies, government organizations, pharmaceutical companies, financial services consultancies, manufacturing companies, and media firms. As Quark has grown, the company's management has continually sought out new channels to grow its business. One of these is the market serving small and midsize businesses, a huge opportunity that represents tens of millions of potential customers in the United States alone. However, the very nature of the small and midsize business market is that it is highly dispersed, and thus, it is difficult and expensive to reach individual decision makers.

A few years ago, the emergence of rich, interactive Web-based technologies began to change the outlook for making significant inroads into the small and midsize market. Beginning around 2008, Quark started evaluating how it could use Web technologies to reach these customers.

“Marketing departments and agencies use Quark's dynamic publishing technology to publish marketing collateral,” says Terry Welty, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Quark. “But small business

owners face a different challenge. They typically don't have experience with or access to professional design and publishing solutions. However, with the growth of the Web, combined with our publishing heritage, we believed there would be a way to serve small businesses that need help creating high-quality yet affordable marketing collateral.”

Certainly, with its market-leading position and expertise in design and publishing, Quark was a natural candidate to address this market. But this would be no easy task. Quark wanted to focus on developing excellent software while avoiding the cost and complexity of creating and managing a Web-hosting business. At the same time, Quark wanted to reach a global base of customers while providing customizable services that could be modified to fit the specific needs of particular business customers and regions.

“At some point in our planning process, we realized that we wanted to create a highly scalable, global solution,” says Dave White, Vice President of Alliances and Emerging Technology at Quark. “We wanted to use a software-plus-services approach to combine the richness of desktop computing and the flexibility and scalability of cloud computing.”

To accomplish its goal, Quark needed a technology platform that could scale globally, while being robust enough to operate smoothly—and be easily managed—in a 24x7 environment that would meet the needs of an international customer base. Furthermore, the development team at Quark needed the ability to quickly make changes to its offering based on customer feedback and market needs. In addition, the solution had to provide rich, easy-to-use

software tools that Quark customers could use on their PCs so that they would not be entirely dependent on Internet connections to customize and manage their marketing materials.

### Solution

Quark created a new solution called Quark Promote that combines an online service with free, downloadable PC-based components with which owners and employees of small and midsize businesses can promote their products and services easily and professionally. Quark Promote was created on the Windows® Azure™ platform using a software-plus-services approach and Microsoft® development software.

The [Windows Azure platform](#) provides on-demand computing and storage capabilities that help developers create, deliver, and manage highly scalable Web applications and services hosted in Microsoft data centers. It lets developers focus on their business logic, as opposed to operational hurdles, in creating compelling offerings such as Quark Promote.

To use Quark Promote, customers download and install the free Quark Promote software. The software provides access to a range of templates, preformatted design elements, and other tools that customers can use to produce materials such as business cards, letterhead, envelopes, flyers, brochures, coupons, and postcards. Customers can easily customize the templates and produce watermarked test prints from their PCs before placing an order. Customers can order the collateral as affordable, high-quality printed materials that can be picked up at a nearby neighborhood printer or delivered by mail.

Mike Booth, owner of a Sir Speedy printing shop in Centennial, Colorado, that is already supporting the Quark Promote offering, explains how easy the process is. "Quark Promote has integrated a neighborhood option where a customer can go online, use their design templates to create their own printed pieces, and then choose a neighborhood printer and have their printed materials done locally," Booth says. "The Quark Promote solution is the best of both worlds. It provides the ease and convenience of Web-based ordering with an additional layer of customer service that can be provided by a neighborhood print provider."

Quark used a range of Microsoft products, technologies, and services to create Quark Promote. "The Quark Promote solution was originally written to be conventionally hosted, but since we were already using the cutting edge of all Microsoft technologies, it was pretty easy to take that solution and host it through the Windows Azure platform," says Stephan Friedl, Chief Software Architect for Quark.

"In essence, it has three components," Friedl explains. "There is a .NET client that is downloaded by users, a set of Web services, and content such as templates that can be modified and customized by the customer. We were very pleasantly surprised by the ease with which we managed to move a traditionally built .NET application into the Windows Azure environment. In particular, the [Microsoft SQL Azure™](#) relational database service was a huge enabler for us to move our application over in a matter of weeks."

With the multitenant capabilities of SQL Azure, each Quark partner can have its

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own independent database that is logically separated from other user databases. This allows Quark to offer fully customizable, outward-facing Web sites where customers can display their own brands. However, all of the databases and Web sites share the same set of core services, making it easy for Quark to provide the same rich feature set to all customers.

Quark evaluated platforms from other companies, including Google and Amazon, as options for Quark Promote. But the Windows Azure platform made the most sense. "We did consider other solutions for cloud computing while doing our due diligence," says Friedl. "But Google is very much a Java environment, which is not a good fit with our tools, including [\[Microsoft\] Visual C#® and .NET](#). Amazon is much more of a traditional virtual machine model, which means we would still have to manage the operating system on upgrades. We wanted to focus on delivering a quality product and robust services, and the Windows Azure platform allowed us to do that."

Development on Quark Promote began in June 2008. A test version was launched in June 2009, and the final, commercially available version was launched in November 2009.

### Benefits

By creating Quark Promote on the Windows Azure platform using Microsoft products, Quark was able to create an innovative solution using a combination of dynamic, agile, and flexible tools and technologies. Quark was able, therefore, to concentrate on the core product features that would be of most value to its customers, instead of spending time and money on infrastructure "plumbing."

The Windows Azure platform also was efficient and cost-effective for Quark, helping it meet its goals of delivering a global, always-available solution without the expense and complexity of a traditional hosted application. The resulting solution not only helps Quark make inroads into a huge potential market, but also helps Quark customers serve their own customers more effectively.

### Dynamic Platform for Innovating

The tools and technologies available with the Windows Azure platform and the Microsoft development environment provided Quark with a dynamic, agile platform to create its innovative solution.

"What we like about Windows Azure as a platform for delivering a product is the great job that Microsoft has done in seamlessly integrating the development tools of its traditional environment into this platform," says Ronnie Thompson, Senior Vice President of Engineering for Quark. "Companies like Quark can take products that are designed using Microsoft technology, and then very quickly and easily migrate them onto Windows Azure. As the head of engineering for Quark, that's one of the things I'm looking for. With the Windows Azure platform, we not only can deliver the kind of innovative solution that we want for the business, but also develop it rapidly and easily."

Because of the flexibility and dynamic nature of the Windows Azure operating system, and the ability to dynamically allocate and remove resources within the Windows Azure cloud platform, Quark is able to exert a very high level of control over a solution that is being delivered globally. "For example, if we see demand peaking during the day," Thompson says, "we can dynamically allocate additional



resources. Likewise, as we see demand waning during certain times of the day, we can deallocate these resources. So we have a lot more control over when and how we deliver this solution globally."

#### **Efficient, Cost-Effective Approach**

Along with offering a powerful development environment, the Windows Azure platform was highly cost-effective for Quark to use. "Windows Azure and cloud computing offer Quark, as a traditional ISV [independent software vendor] software business, the ability to reach a lot more customers at a lot lower cost," says White. "One of the main benefits of using Windows Azure as our cloud platform is the ability to incur cost only as we incur utilization. This stands in contrast to traditional hosting services, where we would have had to pay a large initial fee to even get started, even if our utilization is very low."

This benefit is especially important as the company rolls out Quark Promote to different international markets, where Quark expects to encounter different kinds of customer needs and levels of usage. "The Windows Azure platform helps us scale up efficiently and cost-effectively as we deploy in different regions," says White. "Each region will have different needs for content, and different needs for how services are managed and priced. With Windows Azure and the Microsoft technology stack, we can balance cost, revenue, and utility, adding more resources when they're needed and removing them when they're not."

Friedl notes that the efficiencies and cost effectiveness provided by the Windows Azure platform may dramatically change the way that many software companies do business. "Windows Azure, I believe,

is going to be a huge enabler for whole classes of applications that are not viable economically today because of the expense of hosting," Friedl says. "Windows Azure drops the price barrier. It allows more small shops to get in and provide very compelling solutions. It also provides software ventures like Quark with the ability to very rapidly move to a software-plus-services model and expand into new markets."

#### **Financially Beneficial to Local Printers and Customers**

The technology underlying Quark Promote not only helped Quark in delivering an innovative solution, but is also benefitting local printers like Mike Booth. His Sir Speedy franchise is part of the Sir Speedy network, a Mission Viejo, California-based company that has about 800 locations in 16 countries. Booth sees how powerful the Quark Promote solution can be in helping his business.

"Everyone orders off the Web today, and this is no different than, for example, ordering a pair of jeans online," Booth says. "Quark has really done this right. They have gone after the online printing business, but instead of just having a centralized production facility and sending things via a shipping service, they have added a neighborhood option that allows the customer to do business with a local business like ours. So not only is it easy for our customers to use, it also allows us to participate in the online printing arena and get incremental business from customers that we were not doing business with before."

This is just one example of how the Windows Azure platform can transform business for software makers and their business partners, says Thompson. "For companies like Sir Speedy, what they're

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For more information about Quark products and services, call (303) 894-8888 or visit the Web site at: [www.quark.com](http://www.quark.com)

To view the video documentation of Sir Speedy Centennial/Quark and other success stories visit the Microsoft Success Web site at: [www.microsoft.com/business/success/](http://www.microsoft.com/business/success/)

See how other companies successfully implemented money and time saving solutions in their business using the Windows Azure platform. View an additional case study [here](#).

## Software + Services

Software-plus-services is an industry shift driven by the fast-growing recognition that combining Internet services with client and server software can deliver exciting new opportunities. Microsoft is dedicated to helping individuals and businesses take advantage of these opportunities. By bringing together the best of both software and services, we maximize capabilities, choice, and flexibility for our customers. The broad software-plus-services approach unites multiple industry phenomena including software as a service, service-oriented development, and the Web 2.0 user experience under a common umbrella.

For more information about software-plus-services, go to: [www.microsoft.com/softwareplusservices](http://www.microsoft.com/softwareplusservices)

able to do is actually drive new business for themselves using Quark Promote," he says. "With Windows Azure, we're able to bring a service offering into the marketplace that didn't exist before, and we're enabling our partners to participate in and benefit from that business."

## Microsoft Cloud Services

### Experienced – "It's Microsoft"

Only Microsoft – the leader in business software – provides a comprehensive set of cloud services with the reliability, security and global reach you should expect for your business.

### Committed – "Investing for the future"

Microsoft is completely committed to the cloud: evolving existing products, creating new cloud-based offerings and building the infrastructure to support cloud services at a global level.

### Leading – "Leading in services"

With almost 15 years' experience running some of the largest, most reliable cloud services in the world; Microsoft is the leader in cloud computing that spans businesses, governments and consumers.

For more information about Microsoft Cloud Services, go to: [www.microsoft.com/cloud](http://www.microsoft.com/cloud)

## Windows Azure Platform

The Windows Azure platform provides an excellent foundation for expanding online product and service offerings. The main components include:

- **Windows Azure**, the development, service hosting, and service management environment for the Windows Azure platform. The Windows Azure operating system provides developers with on-demand compute and storage to host, scale, and manage Web applications on the Internet through Microsoft data centers. In addition, Windows Azure serves developers' connectivity needs through the following services:
  - The **Service Bus** connects services and applications across network boundaries to help developers build distributed applications.
  - **Access Control Service** provides federated, claims-based access control for REST Web services.
- **Microsoft SQL Azure**, which offers the first cloud-based relational and self-managed database service built on Microsoft SQL Server® 2008 data management technologies.

To learn more about the Windows Azure platform, visit: [www.windowsazure.com](http://www.windowsazure.com)

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## Software and Services

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