

Mambu helps financial services providers focus on their clients with cloud-based solution

Intense Emphasis SaaS application enables microfinance institutions to provide better service at less cost

For millions of low-income individuals around the world, microfinance institutions (MFIs) offer the financial services that can help them support their families and start and grow their small businesses. While these institutions provide traditional financial services such as small loans, they are often hampered by standard banking applications that do not match their unique business models. With the help of OSF Global Services, Mambu developed a cloud-based banking application that is helping MFIs support some of the neediest people on the planet.

Mambu was established in 2009 by a dedicated team of individuals who believed that everyone should have access to basic financial services. Their key goal was to change the landscape of microfinance by building applications that allowed MFIs, including small non-profits and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), to efficiently run their operations. The result is an online software application that helps MFIs easily and affordably manage their portfolios and clients.

Focusing on core competencies

Like many of their clients, MFIs are often small entities that lack the resources to buy and support large IT infrastructures. They want to focus their efforts on their clients – not on technology.

“Because of their business models and size, it is not easy for MFIs to use the software applications that are traditionally used by established organizations and banks,” explained Frederik Pfisterer, co-founder and managing director of Mambu. “We realized we had to create a unique online solution that offered the scalability, reliability, security, and functionality to meet their specific business needs. After meeting Gerry Szatvanyi, OSF’s CEO, and learning about the services his company offers, we decided to give them a try. The expertise of the OSF personnel immediately paid off for us, and we realized very quickly that OSF was the right partner for a start-up like ours.”

Together, Mambu and OSF Global Services personnel worked to design, develop and deploy a Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solution to help MFIs provide their services faster and less expensively.

Building agility into the process

Using an Agile methodology, Mambu provided the specifications for the new portfolio management tool, while OSF Global Services personnel worked closely with Mambu to develop a stable application in less than a year. "With the Agile development method, we defined work packages and shared them with the OSF team who was working on the application," said Pfisterer. "Each 'sprint' took about three to four weeks to complete, and we are able to release new iterations every month."

OSF Global Services consultants also helped Mambu create a highly scalable infrastructure based on the Amazon Web Services platform. According to Pfisterer, Amazon Web Services was selected because it provides the most mature cloud platform, including the security and back-up capabilities that a financial institution requires.

The SaaS solution allows MFIs to better manage their businesses by providing accounting capabilities, historical reporting and automated journals. The application stores extensive data on clients, including personal details, loan accounts, account history and recent events, that assist loan officers in making informed decisions. The application is available in a number of languages, including English, Spanish, Portuguese and Russian, and supports currencies used around the world.

Expanding application functionality

The relationship between Mambu and OSF Global Services continues to grow, as Mambu adds new functionality and improves the design of its solution to match the needs of its clients. Continuing with its Agile development strategy, one to two iterations of the application are released each month. And Mambu continues to solicit ideas from MFIs about additional functionality they need in areas such as accounting practices, micro-insurance products, investor relations and full-fledged branchless-banking support.

"We believe that our SaaS application is opening new doors for microfinance and helping organizations expand their ability to deliver services," concluded Pfisterer. "By creating an integrated team of Mambu personnel and OSF developers, we have been able to quickly bring a solution to market that addresses the needs of our clients in a cost-effective way. The flexibility of the OSF team and our ability to tap into a network of developers with a wide range of skills has allowed us to expand our vision and meet the goals of our company."