

# New webshop for EFQM: better service for members

**Thanks to a new web solution, EFQM is improving its contact with members. The employees are happy with the webshop too, for it automates the processing in SAP of orders and requests for information about publications and training activities. Ordina used brand new Microsoft tools: ASP.NET 3.5, Visual Studio Team System 2008 and Team Foundation Server 2008. The technology gives EFQM flexibility for the future. Windows Communication Foundation forms the communication layer between the webshop and the internal systems. It simplifies integration with other applications.**

EFQM is an international non-profit organisation with head office in Brussels and 700 members. It helps European organisations in their quest for operational excellence. Their *Excellence Model* is a structured method for gaining insight into the level of excellence of an organisation. The model serves as a reference for improvement strategies.

EFQM provides its members with information that helps them with their improvement strategies. However, the interaction with the customers could be better, as too the use of the internal systems. Consequently, the organisation decided to build a web application. Ordina delivered pioneering work with brand new Microsoft tools. The webshop communicates with SAP. Result: no more time-consuming manual processing.

## Making interactive pages in an easy way

EFQM took the web application of Amazon.com as example. There the users work highly interactively, among other things using fast search functions. With traditional technologies building such a website is a major effort. With Microsoft's ASP.NET AJAX that has become a whole lot simpler.

"In ASP.NET 2.0 AJAX was still an extension. Today it forms part of Visual Studio 2008 and is supported from ASP .NET 3.5", says Gill Cleeren, software architect at Ordina. "This allows you to build in interactivity easily. Simply with a couple of *server controls* you can already create a whole lot of interactive functionality on a page. Thanks to ASP.NET AJAX any internet browser displays the web application in the same way. All visitors share the same user experience."

## JavaScript

For some interactive elements JavaScript code was needed. In the past that used to put off many developers. In JavaScript important development functions simply do not exist. "Thanks to Visual Studio 2008 you now use IntelliSense in JavaScript", explains Gill Cleeren. "That makes writing code loads easier. In the background, IntelliSense checks the type of a variable. It only presents the developer with those functions that are available for that type. Therefore, as a developer you do not have to go looking for possible functions yourself. With Visual Studio 2008 you can also debug JavaScript code, just as with C#."

"Thanks to the integration with ASP.NET AJAX and the JavaScript functions, we were able to build a whole interactive website quickly and cost effectively. Without Visual Studio 2008 that would not have been possible."

## Something for the eye too

Refining the layout of web pages is efficient and simple using Visual Studio 2008. "On one screen you can for example view both the source code and the design", clarifies Gill Cleeren. "You see adjustments you make in one view immediately in the other. Cascading Style Sheets are also better supported. Therefore, as a developer you can instantly see what style sheets are active on a page, and how a screen element comes to view. You no longer have to dig around in the code."



### Ordina Belgium offices

B-3001 Heverlee, Interleuvenlaan 15H • tel. +32 (0)16 27 00 80  
 B-3560 Lummen, Bosstraat 52/2 • tel. +32 (0)13 38 00 00  
 B-9820 Merelbeke, Guldensporenlaan 84/1 • tel. +32 (0)9 280 23 90  
 B-2627 Schelle, Boomsesteenweg 28 • tel. +32 (0)3 866 00 22

[www.ordina.be](http://www.ordina.be)

### Flexible integration with the back office

An important part of the webshop project was integrating with SAP. For this Ordina used Windows Communication Foundation (WCF). "WCF takes data from SAP to the web application and vice versa. We were able to guarantee the communication between the different systems without much extra code."

### Ready for the future thanks to SOA

Is the new system ready for the future? "Sure", confirms Gill Cleeren, "for the *Service Oriented Architecture* (SOA) with WCF means that changes have little impact. If EFQM were to change its internal systems tomorrow, there would be hardly any changes needed in the webshop." Thanks to the .NET Framework, the application is easy to expand and is ready for growth. And integration with Microsoft CRM or other applications is perfectly possible.

### Quality at lower cost

"Team Foundation Server 2008 is an important aid in our quest for quality", says Gill Cleeren. "For instance Continuous Integration is now inherent in Team Foundation Server. This means that the entire code is

regularly built and tested. That makes developing more productive."

### IT as stimulus for the business

Tod Anderson, IT Manager with EFQM, is full of praise for the Ordina approach: "The flexibility and end result are what count for me. Technology is evolving so fast that it is hard to keep pace with everything yourself. Ordina continuously provided us with insight into their approach and the benefits for EFQM. The automated processing gains us much time and money. Our employees can now use that time for continuing to professionalise the relationship management. This new system is a stimulus for our business."

#### Software and services

Microsoft Visual Studio 2008  
Microsoft ASP.NET 3.5  
ASP.NET AJAX  
Microsoft .NET Framework 3.5  
Microsoft SQL Server 2005  
Windows Communication Foundation

## Want to know more about integration projects and SOA?

Call or e-mail us: +32 (0)3 866 00 22, [marketing@ordina.be](mailto:marketing@ordina.be)

Or FAX this page to Ordina: +32 (0)3 866 03 01

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B-3001 Heverlee, Interleuvenlaan 15H • tel. +32 (0)16 27 00 80  
B-3560 Lummen, Bosstraat 52/2 • tel. +32 (0)13 38 00 00  
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B-2627 Schelle, Boomssteenweg 28 • tel. +32 (0)3 866 00 22

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