Aspose.Words for .NET

Gladstone Health & Leisure

www.gladstonemrm.com

Orbit Professional

By Bronya Oldfield, Development Project Manager, November, 2009

Product Background / Overview

Gladstone Health and Leisure, based in the UK, is a market-leading supplier of comprehensive leisure management solutions covering all aspects of membership management and health club fitness facility administration.

Orbit Professional™, the first of a new line of products from Gladstone, is a simple, intelligent and integrated membership management solution for private independent health clubs. The product supports prospecting, member sign up, access control, communication, bookings, point of sale, administration, payment collection and reporting.

Requirements Scenario

An important aspect of health club membership management is the ability to communicate with members via letter, email or text message in order to send them marketing information, renewal reminders, booking reminders, and ad hoc messages.

Communication has to be embedded within the membership management system for the staff to be able to quickly and easily generate and send communications to customers, and also for them to be able to view communications that have been sent to customers.

Gladstone's experience with legacy systems has shown the company that supporting communication requirements within the core product is critical to our customer's successful adoption and use of our membership management products. Historically users had to go through cumbersome, manual processes to export the data from one system to another to generate the outgoing communication. In the past this involved manually exporting data from the membership system into Microsoft Excel, manipulating the data in Microsoft Excel and finally generating the letter via a mail merge in Microsoft Word. By the time the communication has been sent it's taken a lot of user time, it's potentially out of date and worse still, there's no record of the communication in the membership management system.

It was so time intensive club managers had to dedicate time to do it and more often than not, the manual process meant they put it off, or didn't do it all, losing out on providing a quality service to their customers.

Solution Implementation

ASPOSE.Words for .NET is used within Orbit to:

1. Generate document templates enabling users to personalize communication with custom fields from Orbit such as title, first name, last name, full name, address, postcode, telephone number, email address, last visit, birthday, date of birth, next birthday day, email address, bank account, debt detail, debt total, membership type, membership renewal date, renewal amount per payment, payment frequency, next renewal date and user text (specific text added at time message is generated and sent). Any or all of these fields can be used in any of the communication that is sent from Orbit.
2. Send one off letters, emails or text messages to individual contacts (prospects, members, suppliers, staff etc) within the membership management system.
3. Record the communication that has been sent and the successful/failure result of the sending of the communication (email and text message).
4. Send bulk letters, emails or text messages to selected contacts (prospects, members, suppliers, staff etc) within the membership management system.
5. Send membership renewal reminders directly from within the system (with all the details of the membership, payment amount, payment time, commitment period etc).

Benefits

The use of Aspose.Words for .NET has broadened the communication functionality delivered within our product, it is robust and extendable, delivered a key benefit to our customers, and was delivered in less time than if we had to develop the functionality from scratch.

Benefits

- Provides a simple, streamlined process that is easy to for customers to use to quickly send emails and text messages and print letters from Orbit
- Increased speed of development
- Better document model for interacting with Microsoft Word documents
- Better mail merge interface
- Easy conversion of formats, from plain text, to HTML, PDF and xps
- Printing is straightforward and fast (e.g 10 x faster than printing using Word)
- Reliance on Microsoft Word for interacting or printing documents is removed, it's only required for creating templates, so reduces licensing costs for customers
- Easier debugging and troubleshooting

Future Implementations

ASPOSE.Words for .NET will continue to be used in the development of Orbit Professional. We plan to support additional communication requirements and in particular in the next release, the automated scheduling of communications according to individual club requirements (e.g. monthly renewal letter reminders generated automatically).

We will extend document template functionality to support Open Office in addition to Microsoft Word.

Conclusion

The integration of communication along with a query builder/data mining tool within the Orbit product enables Gladstone customers to easily send marketing and membership renewals letters, email sand text messages to contacts quickly and easily in a few simple steps. All communications that have been sent, or tried to be sent to a contact (prospect, member, supplier or staff) can be viewed by the users of the system when reviewing the details of the contact. They have the details of what's been sent and when, so are informed when assisting members in the club.

ASPOSE.Words for .NET has saved the Orbit Professional development team many hours of development. It is easy to use and provides us with the ability to generate communications quickly and consistently from within the product.

Orbit Professional screenshot showing a letter created with ASPOSE.Words for .NET: