

Full-service eBusiness solutions company non~linear creations provides its clients with a solid framework for online success and leverages its own expertise and the business benefits of Microsoft® technologies to drive measurable value.



non~linear creations

NLC Headquarters: Toronto, Canada

Core Business:
NLC develops cohesive strategies and technology solutions for business-critical online activities on both sides of the firewall.

Objective:
To link customers' business objectives and expectations with their online business activities in effective, online solutions that deliver measurable results.

Key Markets:
Retail, Education, Public Sector, Technology, Financial Services, Not-for-Profit

Solution:
Based on Microsoft technologies, NLC's solutions address needs on both sides of the firewall and across multiple practice areas, including Enterprise & Web Content Management, Enterprise Search & Navigation, and Online Strategy.

Benefits:

- NLC's Performance Framework maps corporate objectives with online activities to deliver solutions that drive measurable value.
- NLC's online solutions leverage leading-edge Microsoft technologies to drive traffic, support sales, and attain a strong ROI.

Planning for Online Success

"The Internet presents two significant challenges for today's business," notes Susie Ibbotson, director of marketing for non~linear creations (NLC). "The first is to identify what the company wants to achieve online. The second is to understand how to achieve it effectively."

It's a familiar scenario for NLC. The shift from traditional business to online business has been NLC's focus since its beginnings in 1995, and has driven much of the company's momentum. Today, the Canada-based, full-service eBusiness solutions provider helps clients meet online challenges head-on, providing cohesive strategies and solutions for online activities that leverage the business benefits of Internet technology to drive traffic, support sales, and attain a strong ROI for its enterprise and upper mid-market clients.

But surprisingly, NLC's path to a solution does not begin with the technology. "Businesses must *plan* to succeed online," says John O'Reilly, NLC practice lead for Microsoft technologies. "Many of our customers already have invested in the technology that ultimately will form the basis of a solution. But even before we talk about the tools or the solution, we take a step back to gain a thorough understanding of the customer's business needs, goals – and expectations – of what they want to achieve by being online. It is a critical stage in the planning for online success."

Identifying the customer's corporate objectives and aligning them with their online goals and activities is part of the company's distinct approach that differentiates NLC from other providers. The approach, which NLC refers to as

its Performance Framework, drives the investigative process, keeps the business goals clear, identifies online opportunities and priorities, establishes benchmarks and metrics, defines a timeline, and provides an outline of the tactical steps towards a technology solution that delivers measurable value.

Tools of the Trade

NLC's customized solutions fulfill the gamut of online needs. Whether it's delivering eCommerce platforms, extending merchandizing models to the Internet, providing specialized or interest-based content access for users through the use of portals, or establishing effective content and document management and workflow processes, Ibbotson says that "customers rely on NLC as a key contributor to their online success."

Matching the customers' needs with the right technology is one of NLC's strengths. As a result of its 15 years of developing and delivering hundreds of effective eBusiness solutions, NLC has acquired extensive experience with the many online technologies available. "We know which technologies are the best out there because we've worked with them all," says Ibbotson.

An active Microsoft Gold Certified partner, NLC obviously sees significant advantages to the Microsoft portfolio, with brand recognition, trust, and powerful capabilities ranking high on that list.

"Most of the large enterprises already are invested in some type of Microsoft technology," says Ibbotson. "There is a natural evolution of Microsoft technologies within most enterprises, especially from the comfort applications such as Microsoft Word® and Excel®."

In addition, Microsoft-based solutions work well on both sides of the firewall. "About 40 percent of our business is behind the firewall. For those intranet and portal solutions, our team is invested heavily in SharePoint®," explains Ibbotson. "The other 60 percent of our business is focused on content management and on needs outside of the firewall, for instance, eCommerce requirements. We work with Microsoft Gold ISV partner Sitecore®, which uses .NET technology, to implement those solutions."

Because search is a central component in its online solutions, NLC views Microsoft's investment in FAST™ search technology as a substantial benefit. "Microsoft provides effective search options for our customers that span their needs both inside and outside of the firewall," Ibbotson notes. "We've had tremendous success with Microsoft-FAST search capabilities in the content-heavy retail and higher education verticals. And with people just beginning to realize how important search is to their online success, it's a great benefit to have such powerful – and scalable – search capabilities readily available within the Microsoft line."

The NLC team also is excited – and prepared – to begin designing and deploying successful SharePoint 2010 solutions. Part of the Microsoft Partner Evidence Program (PEP) for SharePoint 2010, the NLC team is already working with full development environments, familiarizing and educating themselves on the software, and determining optimal migration strategies. "We're trained, ready, and looking forward to new capabilities in SharePoint 2010, especially the multilingual and accessibility features," says O'Reilly. "SharePoint 2010 will open doors for us in the public sector," he predicts, "which typically has much older solutions in place, but nothing that offers the benefits and flexibility that SharePoint 2010 can provide."

Elements of Success

NLC places tremendous value on the ability of its solutions to fit its customers' requirements, according to Ibbotson. The Performance Framework and the technology are at the core of NLC's online solution success. "The Performance Framework helps the client think through the process. And NLC regularly taps

into the power of Microsoft technologies to generate value for our customers," she says.

Partner preparedness also plays an important role. Trained and certified in several Microsoft competencies, including Information Worker solutions (Enterprise Content Management and Forms, Portals and Collaboration, and FAST search), and custom development solutions, NLC is invested and committed to success using Microsoft technology. "With the many online capabilities available in its portfolio – FAST search, .NET, and SharePoint to name a few – Microsoft is a natural fit for both our Internet and intranet solutions," says Ibbotson. The measurable results – and the customers – speak for themselves.

About NLC

non~linear creations is a leading Canadian Internet consulting firm formed in 1995. Our vision: to leverage the business benefits of Internet technology to drive a strong return on investment for our global clients. The focus on delivering results is baked into NLC's corporate DNA and drives our areas of practice which include, Enterprise & Web Content Management, Enterprise Search & Navigation, Online Strategy, Search Engine Marketing, Email Marketing, Application Development & Integration, Site Design & Multimedia, and Web Analytics.

About FAST, A Microsoft Subsidiary

FAST, A Microsoft Subsidiary, is the leading global provider of best-in-class enterprise search technologies for the most demanding applications. FAST's flexible and scalable enterprise search platform (FAST ESP®) empowers people and businesses, allowing them to explore and assimilate vast amounts of data regardless of format. By creating unique user experiences and changing the way people interact with information, FAST technologies can uncover new revenue streams, improve business decisions, and increase productivity.

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