

Nominee: Carrenza

Nomination title: The Carrenza Intershop PaaS

Recently, Intershop announced the launch of a new 'as-a-Service' offering for the retail sector, built utilising Carrenza's PaaS Enablement Service and delivered from Carrenza's IaaS in the UK and the Netherlands: <http://carrenza.com/news/intershop-and-carrenza-combine-their-expertise-to-deliver-a-unique-offering-for-omni-channel-commerce>. By turning the Intershop application into a PaaS, Intershop and their system integrator partners are now able to offer their customers a SaaS solution.

Traditionally, the Intershop application was only been available as an on premise solution and due to the age of the application and its underlying code (the first Intershop deployment was in the early 1990s and some of the early code is still used) it was an expensive and time consuming process to install the Intershop application and provision the underlying infrastructure. Indeed, for the first Carrenza hosted Intershop project it took Intershop almost four weeks just to provision the infrastructure, application and database before the developers could begin to build the online shop. For the new PaaS offering, Carrenza have automated and streamlined the deployment of the Intershop application, the underlying infrastructure and database without having to rewrite the software. What used to take several weeks can now be completed in less than an hour, resulting in a highly available service with built in scalability and resiliency.

With years of experience and use cases, Carrenza have developed a PaaS Enablement Service for delivering applications; meaning the software vendor, such as Intershop, is able to consume their application as a PaaS and in turn deliver a SaaS solution to their customers.

To facilitate this, Carrenza applies agile software development tools and methodologies to build and maintain their infrastructure and the platform that the software sits on top of. This enables the automated deployment and build of the entire infrastructure environment – including servers, storage, networking, hypervisor and operating system, as well as the installation of the database and software application.

The Carrenza PaaS Enablement Service can be applied to almost any application. The infrastructure and the platform are really three different items coming together - the install media, the physical tin and the one that makes it unique - the configuration. For Carrenza, configuration is viewed as code, so Carrenza is able to deal with that the same way that they deal with the application - place it in version control, drive it through an automated testing process and have a tested artefact that can be deployed as and when it is needed. This results in an end-to-end version control automated deployment process - not just for the software, but also for the platform and infrastructure.

As a result some of the world's biggest brands now rely on the full functionality of the Intershop-as-a-Service platform to centrally manage, support and reach each and every one of their customers, partners, and suppliers. These include the likes of de Bijenkorf, Majestic Wine and the online Harry Potter bookstore, Pottermore.

Before the new service was launched Intershop focussed on high-end retailers with large budgets and wide-ranging systems that can absorb high upfront costs. In part, this focus was due to the complexity of deploying the application; and whilst its existing resource-heavy, highly customised options were working well for its larger customers, the level of manual intervention required often meant that Intershop wasn't an affordable option for mid-market and smaller retailers.

Through simplifying and automating the deployment process Carrenza opened a new market that was otherwise closed. Udo Rauch, VP Channel at Intershop has been quoted in the press as saying: "...with so many mid-market firms crying out for better systems, there was a whole new market available to us...Carrenza's solution meant we were still able to use our existing application suite, ensuring staff familiarity and development continuity. As a result we benefit from lower costs and much greater ease of use thanks to Carrenza's platform. This means we can now offer our solution to a wider market than before."

For the end-customer retailers, the new Intershop service provides several benefits over the traditional Intershop licence model. Firstly, the as-a-Service model eradicates initial capital expenditure on both the application licencing and on the underlying infrastructure, whilst also reducing set-up times and associated costs by up to 80%.

Additionally, the on-demand nature of the service provides retailers with automated scalability, meaning they have the ability to react quickly to changes in demand without having to make an upfront capital investment in infrastructure. This provides them with the peace of mind that their Intershop ecommerce environment will support their business growth and seasonal demand whilst reducing business risk and capital expenditure.

Udo Rauch, VP Channel at Intershop was quoted in the press saying: “The partnership with Carrenza enables us to offer fully scalable on-demand solutions to our partners and customers. That trust and competence that we have built up with Carrenza has been the basis on which our relationship has flourished, and we’re now excited to engage further with them to take us to new markets and ensure even more customers can benefit from our omni-channel commerce solution.”

Among the successes of the PaaS is the support of Dutch retailer de Bijenkorf Three Crazy Days sale in October 2013. During this event, the client’s website was the second-busiest ecommerce platform in Europe, so it was vital that the firm could rely on its partners to scale its offering quickly for the occasion.

Furthermore, Richard Weaver, Ecommerce Director at Majestic Wine said in ERP Retail News: “The service provided by Carrenza and Intershop provides the flexibility and scalability required to meet the needs of our online business, both today and for future growth. We wanted a best-of-breed product capable of meeting our requirements and the solution from Carrenza and Intershop delivers.”

Indeed, Weaver was quoted in CBR as saying: “We opted for Carrenza because of their proven track record in delivering some of Europe’s busiest ecommerce environments, often having to cope with seasonal peaks and varying demand. This gives us the peace of mind that comes from having a reliable ecommerce infrastructure that we can scale as and when we need it.”

Why nominee should win

* Intershop is now able to offer their customers a solution they want: on demand, flexible and easily scalable.

* The service enables Intershop and their system integrator (reseller) partner to focus on delivering value to their customers.

- * The service has enabled Intershop to widen its target market and compete with newer SaaS only providers, who were taking away market share.
- * Intershop have been able to reduce their sales cycles as hosting is no longer a concern
- * The solution delivers full functionality of the latest version of Intershop's E-commerce Platform, enabling a true omni-channel experience for retailers.