

Future Processing



## CONTENTS

1. ABOUT THE CLIENT	2
2. WHY OUTSOURCE TO FUTURE PROCESSING?	3
3. FUTURE PROCESSING'S ROLE	4
4. BENEFITS OF THE PARTNERSHIP	5
5. BUSINESS PROBLEM THAT WAS SOLVED	6
6. LOOKING TO THE FUTURE	6

## ABOUT THE CLIENT

Zest, previously known as Staffcare, was established in 2004 to focus on providing software for reward communication, enrolment and benefits administration. The company is well established with proven, accepted technologies and an expanding customer base.

Staffcare's software has been independently voted best in class by the industries' leading professionals.

*Over 300 organisations manage their benefits using Staffcare's technology and more Benefit Consultants recommend it than any other workplace technology of its kind.*

A flexibility to configure the software in a way which is not usually available with standard software packages is what distinguishes Staffcare. Their product range is affordable to small businesses and scalable for the very large ones.

Staffcare's portfolio of clients includes, among others, **Puma, Cushman & Wakefield, Aviva, Bet365, Withers Worldwide** and **Dixons**.

# WHY OUTSOURCE TO FUTURE PROCESSING?

With a desire to win bigger projects and maximise the contribution to the rapidly growing market, Staffcare decided to outsource an element of their engineering and development to increase their IT capabilities.

Outsourcing to Future Processing gave greater flexibility to scale up and down depending on client and project requirements.

Craig Kritzinger, IT director for Staffcare, led the project. After speaking to people within the business who had previous experience of outsourcing relationships, his starting point was to find a partner where effective communication and collaborative working were the priority.

**This, he explains, is how nearshoring became the chosen alternative:**

*The need for close working relationships made us start looking within Eastern Europe where it is relatively easy for people to hop on planes and visit each other's offices.*

**CRAIG KRITZINGER,**  
IT director for Staffcare

Once the area was chosen, the next considerations were relationship, skill sets and price. This further narrowed the possibilities.

*As part of this exercise we also undertook client references and met with Future Processing's CEO. We immediately found that it felt like this was an organisation with a culture that we could work with and that these were people who fitted in with our values, and speaking to some of their other clients we were able to validate our first impression; Future Processing is an open and honest organisation with whom we could develop a highly beneficial relationship.*

**Craig Kritzinger also lists the key reasons for working with a partner in this market:**

*I find that the people I've encountered in Poland are friendly, their spoken English is good, I've never had any communication problems with people that I've worked with. It's an easy place to access, a couple of hours' flight from any of the London airports, and quick motorway links to the office. So it's not a problem to visit for a day, if you need to have meetings. By the same token, people from the team can visit the UK in just a couple of hours.*



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# FUTURE PROCESSING'S ROLE

As a long standing provider to Staffcare already, it was also helpful for them to be able to leverage existing skills within Future Processing.

We work very closely with Staffcare in a true cooperation and partnership, handling development and testing on a daily basis and adding new functionalities to adjust applications to Staffcare's clients' needs.

Our team members bring a diverse point of view to each development, which is beneficial for both teams. Regular contact is paramount and we have visits every six weeks and daily communication via Skype or email.

**The partnership has been so successful that Staffcare is now one of Future Processing's longest standing customers.**

 *Future Processing extends the size of our software development and Quality Assurance teams. In addition they add to our team of technical leaders in the UK, getting involved in the development of our core technology that we use to provide flexible benefits communication capability to our clients.*

*What this means in day to day practicality, is that our technical leads in the UK translate the business requirements that we have into technical solutions, in collaboration with the software developers at Future Processing in Poland. As well as completing all Quality Assurance in Poland, they also give us the opportunity to access additional technical expertise from outside the core team. So, whenever we need extra assistance with security testing, user experience changes etc., we're able to ask Future Processing to bring some technical expertise to help improve what we are delivering.*

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Our approach supported the creation of a mutual leadership in Poland and in the UK, with both teams working side by side. Initially, the team only had three developers. **However, in July 2011 we started working on one of our biggest projects and the size of the team multiplied.**

- We introduced some improvements to carry out the project properly, some of which were: security enhancements (single sign-on, self-registration, etc.), automated imports from FTP servers, a new registration process and integration with multiple external systems.
- Facing the implementation of such a big project, we were able to quickly expand the team, adding 15 developers and 8 Quality Assurance engineers in quickly.
- As part of our partnership we also provided a Business Analyst, who spent half her time in Poland and half at Staffcare's headquarters in the UK, ensuring that the Client's needs were met. The Business Analyst greatly enriched the value of the project in terms of quality and has subsequently been superseded by a Product Owner provided by Future Processing. Based in Poland, the Product Owner helps ensure the transfer of business domain knowledge and business needs from the UK to Poland.
- We've not only broadened and adjusted Staffcare's management system, but also delivered on a complicated and highly personalised project that had over 20 subprojects running at the same time.
- The software was developed with the highest quality, making it is easy to update and configure. It was all completed while meeting deadlines and fulfilling on requirements. Additionally, the original goal was completed at a reduced cost, compared to developing the projects in-house.
- An additional benefit was that we also created a dedicated team among our developers and Quality Assurance engineers, who had extensive domain knowledge. This structure meant faster development of projects and a more effective partnership. The team worked on complicated parts of the software and was able to solve urgent problems.
- More than anything, we've proved the adaptability of Future Processing's engineers, who showed advanced programming skills and guaranteed flexible implementation of changes in the application.

**Q** Future Processing's Quality Assurance people interact directly with our client's staff and we are comfortable that the people provided could be put out as our own. We've been open with our clients that these are Future Processing's staff and I didn't feel the need to shadow them or attend meetings with them, I could put them forward directly in client facing meetings.

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**Q** Future Processing provides us with Developers and Quality Assurance engineers, so actual people who we can build up a relationship with.

I still have some of the very first people who joined the team working with me. When I travel over to Future Processing I get to meet these people who I've come to know and are a part of my team. The ability to flex and to grow the team or to shrink it as things change, obviously affects this balance slightly, but we get to know each other and we build up long-term relationships and work together.

**Some examples of projects we completed for Staffcare:**

- **Ellipse** - Enabled data exchange between applications using web services. One of them is the benefit portal while the other is for the provider of benefits. The data exchanged between them contains information about benefit selections and costs made by users of the 1st application, which is then sent to the 2nd application. The 2nd application validates the data and sends adjustments back to the 1st application if needed.
- **Mustang** - Delivered a single, online interface to an employer's total reward offering, including their company pension. It also offered a simple way for employees to browse and select their benefits.
- **Staffcare WebAPI** - The goal of this project was to create a network platform that shares XML messages to third parties with proper use of a security model.
- **Holiday and Absence Tracking System** - Used to plan and schedule employees' holidays and absences.
- **ZED** - An internal project for Staffcare. Developing a wizard allowing self-configuration of websites.

## BENEFITS OF THE PARTNERSHIP

**Q** The key value that Future Processing brings to us is that we've got a large pool of technical expertise that we can leverage. We know that, through the relationship that Future Processing has with local Universities and the broader reach of their teams, it's not just the actual software developers we contracted for, but they can reach out elsewhere. We wouldn't have that capability if we employed all of these people in-house in the UK, so it's a big value add in expertise. Obviously there's also a price differential. Having the same sized team based in the UK would cost us a lot more money, so there's a commercial benefit. Frankly, we wouldn't be able to get to market in the same amount of time, because we wouldn't be able to have the same sized team.



## BUSINESS PROBLEM THAT WAS SOLVED

The main business problem for our Client was lack of readily available internal resources. In the course of our long-standing partnership, Future Processing provided highly scalable teams, allowing Staffcare to take on more projects, supporting their growth and helping to build a competitive advantage.

We introduced new tools and processes which brought some innovation to our Client's in-house team. We also saved time and money, which would otherwise have been spent on recruitment processes.

Working together, Future Processing helps Staffcare solve problems and adjust to changes in law, giving them the benefit of being able to focus on their core business.

Most importantly, though, our work resulted in improving performance of Staffcare's applications. They are now working faster and better, and Staffcare is able to successfully fulfill obligations to more clients.

*We've been working with Future Processing for five years and absolutely they've become a part of our team, the cooperation is seamless. We've undertaken and successfully delivered projects we simply couldn't have tackled with our own employees, within shorter timeframes than we could ever have dreamed of. Future Processing's staff has directly liaised with our customers, and been seen as an extension of our own team. I'd recommend them at any time.*

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

After many complex, successful projects Future Processing and Staffcare expect their partnership to go from strength to strength.

*We're planning to continue the relationship we have with Future Processing and as a part of that relationship we do tend to flex the size of our team and we do change what Future Processing delivers to us from time to time.*

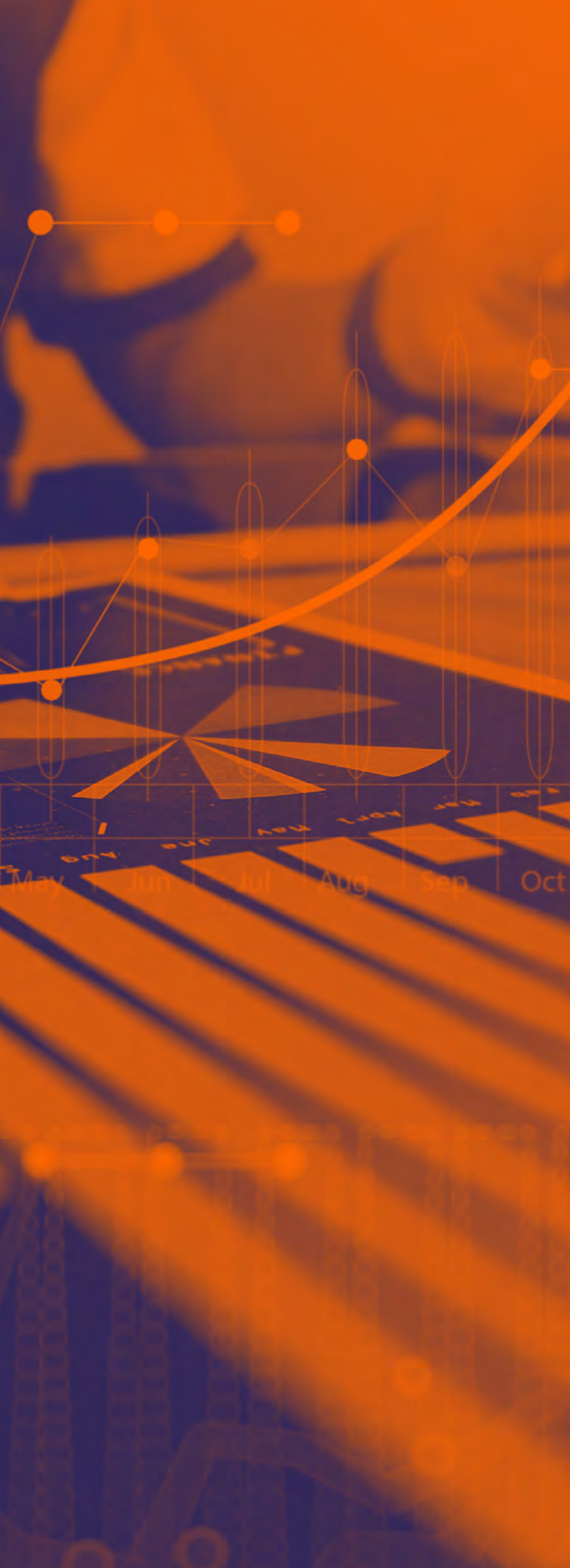
*Where we stand today, our team's size has just grown again, but we absolutely intend to continue the relationship and continue to leverage that ability to flex.*

### PRIMARY TECHNOLOGIES & TOOLS USED:

- ASP .NET WebForms
- ASP .NET MVC
- Microsoft SQL Server
- Windows Communication Foundation
- XSLT
- Visual Studio
- Web Service
- MS Windows Service
- Team Foundation Server
- Automated tests: Rhino Mocks



CAN WE HELP YOU SOLVE YOUR BUSINESS PROBLEM? CONTACT US TO FIND OUT.



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