

RETAIL

SUCCESS STORY

Homebase speeds up SAP application modernization using low-code

Homebase rapidly developed a mission-critical click-and-collect app to keep stores operational during the pandemic and paves the way for digital transformation.

Company Snapshot

Homebase are the Home and Garden Experts with over 150 stores and 5,600 team members across the UK and Ireland. With over 40 years experience, they have everything customers need to bring their homes and gardens to life.




Industry Focus

Home-Improvement Retailer

System Version

SAP ERP

Devices

A range of BYOD team member devices

Timeline

Eight weeks to develop the mission-critical click-and-collect application the company needed to operate during the COVID-19 pandemic

Number of Users

5,000 users



Retail



Challenges

- Outdated ERP application (SAP)
- Needed to innovate and build new automation
- Demand to increase productivity during a turnaround



Solutions

- “Click-and-collect” application built with Neptune while all of Homebase, including IT worked remotely
- Numerous additional supply chain and order-management applications and projects



Benefits

- Ability to operate and stay open during the COVID-19 pandemic, thanks to the click-and-collect application
- Empowerment and skills addition in the IT team to build great digital solutions

The Success Story

Challenges: Outdated user interfaces didn't support modern need for speed and convenience

As the **Home and Garden experts in the U.K**, Homebase knows the power of a good customer experience.

Like many retailers, however, **the company had been operating with older IT systems, including an outdated enterprise resource planning (SAP ERP) solution** that was no longer being supported by the vendor. The technology challenges it faced made it difficult to move forward with modernizing its applications and providing the kinds of streamlined and mobile user experiences that customers and team members favored.

Additionally, the company's back-end ordering system was housed in SAP, which complicated the ability to create a modern front-end website.

Meanwhile, **Homebase needed ways to meet customer demand for more convenient solutions, such as enabling click-and-collect** (buy-online/pickup in-store) shopping.

With the start of the pandemic, Homebase needed to accelerate its online capabilities by rapidly introducing click-and-collect.

The brick-and-mortar **company needed to transform itself into a strictly online business with in-store delivery**. The need for click-and-collect went rapidly from nice to have to mission-critical.

To support the new shopping model, store **personnel would need updated mobile devices**. The company solved that potentially costly challenge by implementing a "Bring Your Own Device" (BYOD) policy for team members.

That's when the search for a low-code application platform began. And Paul Cannon, Homebase Director of IT at Homebase found what he needed in Neptune Software. **He chose Neptune DXP for its intuitive, easy-to-use application development platform** and its deep integration expertise with back-end systems powered by SAP.

Solution: Modern, mobile app developed in 8 weeks and launched rapidly to keep business operating

In the fall of 2020, under lockdown with team members working remotely, the team set out to quickly get up to speed on the new application development process and build out new click-and-collect capabilities.

The team was able to **create the new application in less than eight weeks**, well ahead of the rollout of the hardware and service infrastructure needed to support the new processes.

The timeline itself is remarkable considering how important the application was in helping Homebase survive during the pandemic and how new developers were to the platform. But that's exactly the **kind of developer velocity organizations can achieve with Neptune Software, whether engaging novice developers on their first project or seasoned back-end ABAP developers new to mobile like those on Cannon's team**.

“It may have taken 10 times longer to deliver the same functionality with SAP tools and on SAP platforms than it took with Neptune.”

Paul Cannon, Director of IT
at Homebase

A new application that empowers the company to ring-fence the company's inventory has freed up a dedicated resource. Today, business users can quickly and easily reserve items for campaigns and special stores, among other things, and a worker who used to provide the capability manually in the SAP back-end system has been freed to work on more pressing tasks.

Homebase also **launched a Neptune-powered vendor/supplier portal that empowers suppliers to manage their invoices.** Previously managed by a dedicated call center, automating this service has also increased capacity for the team, empowering them to focus on other, more value-adding activities.

Benefits: Neptune Software is Homebase's modernization tool

With support from partners of Neptune providing skills, expertise and training, Homebase's 15-20 person IT team quickly came up to speed, enhancing their skill sets in the process. Providing modern skills for team members is a known means of improving team member satisfaction.

“We could not have continued operations during the COVID-19 lockdowns if we did not have the Neptune-based click-and-collect app.”

Paul Cannon, Director of IT at Homebase

Cannon projected that it might have taken 10 times longer to deliver the same functionality with SAP tools and on SAP platforms than it took with Neptune. There would have also been additional license and platform costs.

Today, Homebase stores enjoy multiple modern applications used both as web applications and on mobile devices. The tangible returns on investment are adding up. Homebase's BYOD approach also paid off. **With Neptune applications deployed across a large fleet of team member smartphones, the company realized substantial financial savings as well.**

The company continues to move forward on its **digital transformation journey, using Neptune DXP as its key modernization tool.**

Moving forward, the IT team is evaluating a project to **use Neptune Software to link systems and provide a modern, mobile user interface for a new point-of-sale (POS) system.** To streamline and simplify order management, Homebase also aims to replace handheld terminals with modern and more cost-effective Android devices. And finally, as the company begins to move beyond the impact of the pandemic, the IT team is also working on a Neptune app to give managers better insights into how merchandise is moving between suppliers and distribution centers.

**This success story has been developed based on the source document: "Homebase Introduces Low Code to Accelerate Its Digital Transformation: Neptune DXP Plays Critical Role in Homebase Application Modernization," by Holger Mueller, Vice President and Principal Analyst at Constellation Research.*

About Neptune Software

Neptune Software is a rapid application development platform vendor with more than 660 enterprise customers and over 3.5 million licensed end users globally that empowers IT departments to deliver tangible business outcomes. Neptune Software offers with its Neptune DXP, a leading low-code, SAP-centric, enterprise app development platform to digitize and optimize business processes and user interfaces – at scale and with ease. Neptune DXP provides a fast and cost-effective way to industrialize the development of custom applications - saving companies time and money on development, integration, and operations. More info at: www.neptune-software.com