

CASE STUDY

EventBoard – How Falafel Software leveraged multiple Telerik technologies to develop their successful event guide platform, serving more than 30K event visitors in 2012



In a competitive marketplace, Falafel Software supercharged the development of EventBoard by leveraging Telerik technologies for [Windows Phone](#) and [Silverlight](#), and the [Sitefinity](#) web content management platform.

OVERVIEW

COUNTRY
US

INDUSTRY
Events

TELERIK PARTNER PROFILE
California-based Falafel Software is a leading Telerik partner, delivering software development, training and consulting services. Specializing in web and mobile development, Falafel is a respected member of the Telerik community.

BUSINESS SITUATION
In a competitive marketplace, Falafel Software needed technologies that would drive the development of their successful EventBoard mobile conference guide application.

SOLUTION
Falafel Software leveraged multiple Telerik technologies to deliver an updated version of the EventBoard backend, mobile client and online marketing support.

- BENEFITS**
- Flexible, easy-to-use developer tools saved time and money
 - Telerik UI components provide high quality mobile user experience
 - Sitefinity empowers marketing team to communicate without technical assistance



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Mike Dugan, Marketing Director, Falafel Software



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Mike Dugan, Marketing Director, Falafel Software

BACKGROUND

As anyone attending a conference or trade show knows, one major headache is navigating the many sessions and seminars available without missing out on key topics. Even with a show guide in hand, it's easy to leave disappointed.

For organizers, this is a serious issue. With the global exhibitions and trade shows business worth an estimated \$40 billion, competition is fierce and organizers must engage audiences effectively. However, with the largest shows scaling up to hundreds of thousands of attendees, traditional communication methods – such as printed event guides – are expensive and inefficient.

Inspired by the experience of building a custom event app for Silicon Valley Code Camp in 2010,

Falafel Software set out to solve this problem using mobile and web technologies.

“Mobile devices are ubiquitous these days – they're everywhere you look,” says Mike Dugan, Director of Marketing at Falafel Software. “The idea of a mobile conference guide is a new phenomenon – it brings these guides to life by enabling attendees to browse and search for sessions, create personal agendas, view floor plans and read event news and tweets.”

THE CHALLENGE

Falafel Software's vision for EventBoard is two-fold. For event managers, it is an effective tool to create revenue opportunities by promoting sponsors, pushing real-time event news and content updates and gathering critical marketing data, while reducing – and ultimately potentially eliminating – event guide print costs. Using a Silverlight management console, organizers can create and edit content before and during the event, see analytics and feedback in real-time, and push content to attendees.

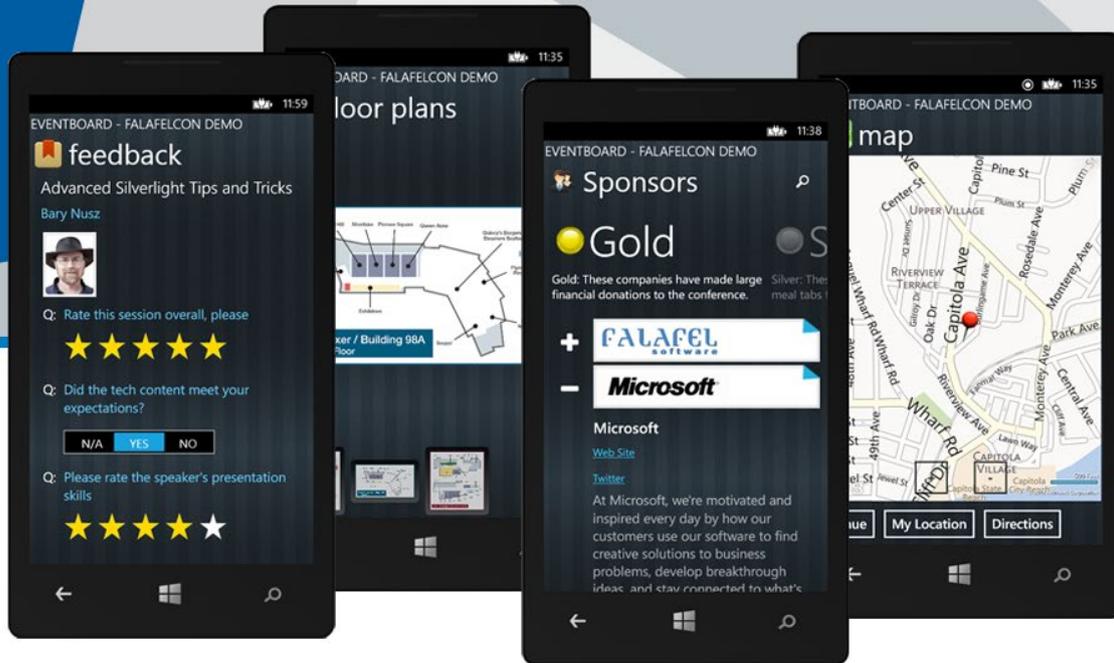
For event attendees, EventBoard is a natural extension of the event on their mobile devices, styled to blend seamlessly with other

event communications while offering useful functionality to help navigate and rate sessions. Users see sessions and can mark ones of interest, creating their own unique track within the conference; while electronic session surveys enable users to provide instant, paperless feedback to organizers.

In a highly competitive market, Falafel Software's business strategy is for EventBoard to compete as the low-cost, quick and easy option. While other systems require lengthy implementation periods, EventBoard can be up and running overnight. This includes theming the mobile client apps to match the event's identity and populating the system with event data.

To achieve this, EventBoard was developed with a rich backend for organizers delivered through the cloud using Microsoft Azure; and as a suite of robust, flexible client apps available to attendees on all the major mobile platforms. High priority was given to offering a native experience on all devices and to being equally fast and easy-to-use on iPhone, Android, Windows Phone and Windows 8.

The key to delivering all of this was choosing the right combination of development technologies.



TELERIK TECHNOLOGIES SUPPORT YOU THROUGHOUT YOUR PROJECT

Telerik tools add value throughout the lifecycle of your project – through application development to marketing and beyond.

DevCraft by Telerik brings the developer tools together in one place. DevCraft provides a comprehensive UI toolset spanning all the Microsoft .NET development stacks, plus JavaScript/HTML5. DevCraft Complete supercharges your team with the Just Series of productivity-enhancing plugins for Visual Studio and Windows Reporting, while DevCraft Ultimate provides phone support for total peace of mind.

Sitefinity builds on Telerik's expertise in technology and UI excellence to deliver high productivity for developers and business users alike, supporting your business as you take products beyond the development environment into the marketplace with an online presence that will engage your audience whatever platform they choose to browse on.

With this comprehensive tool kit, your business can rely on Telerik to support your development strategy and your marketing needs.

THE SOLUTION

Drawing on its considerable expertise as Microsoft Gold Partners and award-winning software developers, Falafel Software chose to leverage multiple technologies created by Telerik.

"We've had a strong relationship with Telerik since the beginning; we've written thousands of lines of Telerik courseware and offered hundreds of training sessions for its products including Sitefinity, Test Studio and Telerik RadControls. In looking to build a broad, feature-rich Windows Phone app, Telerik's tools were our first choice," says Mike.

Although Falafel Software is a long-time Telerik Partner, the choice of Telerik products was made strictly on merit. The design for EventBoard encompassed three primary elements: a Windows Phone app, a Silverlight-based conference administration portal and a website to market the product.

Telerik was one of the few technology vendors capable of addressing this diverse array of platforms with the RadControls for Windows Phone, RadControls

for Silverlight and the Sitefinity Web Content Management (WCM) platform.

Windows Phone

Using the RadControls for Windows Phone by Telerik, Falafel Software was able to rapidly build an elegant and intuitive UI. "As a Microsoft partner, ensuring that the Windows Phone version of EventBoard stood out was critically important," says Mike. "Telerik RadControls for Windows Phone helped us achieve this goal – we rate the look and feel of that app very highly."

The Falafel Software team found the Telerik tools easy-to-use. "I was easily able to add transition effects to our Windows Phone application in only a few minutes with Telerik's controls," says Jonathan Tower, Software Engineer at Falafel Software.

Silverlight

To maintain a uniform look-and-feel, the EventBoard conference administration portal needed to replicate the clean, easy-to-use UI found in the mobile app. Addressing this challenge was simple with the addition of Telerik RadControls



for Silverlight. By applying skins across key components, including RadGridView, RadComboBox, RadNumericUpDown, RadDatePicker, and RadTabControl, the Falafel Software team was able to deliver the required consistency with the WP app's UI, with minimal effort.

The RadControls' out-of-the-box flexibility, power and performance were essential to the team's

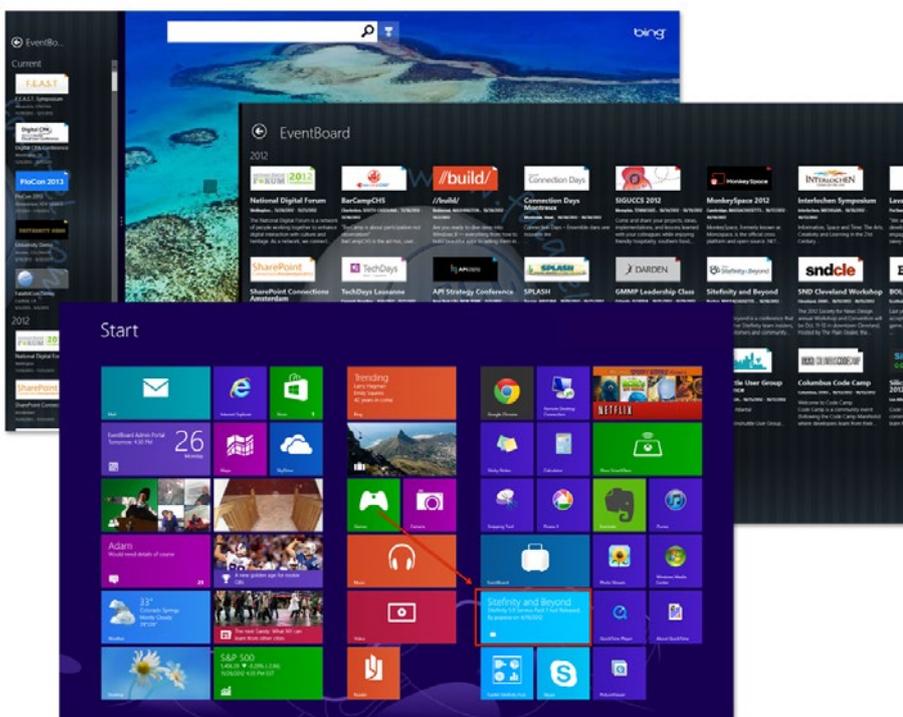
productivity. "RadGridView's asynchronous data binding, custom filtering, and built-in data validation and image column meant we had to write zero lines of grid-related code to handle our scenarios," says Mike. "It would have been foolish to try and recreate this on our own or to stick with just the standard components."

Falafel Software Engineer Josh Eastburn agrees. "Telerik's Silverlight RadControls have saved me countless hours of development time. And when a control isn't exactly what I need, I can extend, customize or style it to fit my needs. I love how RadControls get better with every release – you can tell the Telerik team is hard at work giving developers what they request."

Product Website

The final project challenge was to communicate the EventBoard value proposition with a product website. With Falafel's intimate knowledge of Sitefinity, it was a natural choice.

"We've conducted hundreds of Sitefinity training seminars, so leveraging the power of Sitefinity here was a no-brainer," says Mike. "The blog and form modules were integrated into the product's website and marketing personnel can now communicate EventBoard news without any help from a web developer."



THE RESULT

EventBoard was released in October 2010. In its first year, it was employed at more than 20 technical conferences worldwide including Microsoft TechEd 2011, and attracted acclaim from organizers and media alike.

Infoworld journalist J. Peter Bruzzese said: "Also of note was Falafel.com's EventBoard, a mobile app for the iPhone, Android and Windows Phone 7 that made navigating TechEd (traditionally a nightmare task regardless of the location) a breeze... frankly, it was better than the booklet issued to the audience... I can see this as a must for any show."

Organizers of other conferences agreed. "EventBoard provided us the best way to reach attendees across all mobile platforms, which would have taken a significant effort on our part," says John Kellar, DevLink Technical Conference organizer. DevReach organizer Martin Kulov says: "It's the must-have app for every conference."

It keeps all your data in one easy-to-access and always available storage. It is also an irreplaceable tool for engaging with your audience."

Since then, EventBoard has gone from strength to strength. In its second year, EventBoard has been used at 120 events, including major tech events such as TechDays Switzerland, DevConnections, Microsoft Azure Cloud Day and the Windows TechConference.

EventBoard's capabilities are demonstrated by its deployment at TechEd Europe, which carries 425 sessions. In the last year, more than 30,000 attendees have used EventBoard in 16 countries and 15,000 of them have provided feedback through surveys offered in the app.

EventBoard has also broken out into other verticals, serving events covering security, accounting, publishing, education, agriculture and the arts. It is also used by corporate customers such as Darden Restaurant Group, owners of the Red Lobster, Olive Garden and Longhorn Steakhouse brands in the US.

THE VERDICT

"The response to EventBoard has been tremendous, and the need to continually innovate is clearly apparent," says Mike. "New features, guided by customer feedback, are being continually rolled out and tools from Telerik help make this aggressive development schedule a reality."

"The cost to Falafel was greatly reduced by the tools from Telerik. Using the array of tools from Telerik put the entire solution far ahead of the pack. We were able to deliver a Windows Phone mobile application, a Silverlight web application, and a product website leveraging Sitefinity, in the same amount of time that it takes most products just to complete their first iteration. Using the Telerik tools meant more features in less time, beautiful user interfaces with less effort, and better performance with less code."

ABOUT FALAFEL SOFTWARE

Falafel Software, an eight-time Microsoft Gold Certified partner, has been providing custom software development, consultation and training services worldwide since 2003. Having standardized on Telerik's UI components and developer productivity tools, Falafel has developed close relationships with Telerik's business and development teams, and has built a world-class consulting and training practice around Telerik products. www.falafel.com

ABOUT DEVCRAFT BY TELERIK

The DevCraft collections include all Telerik developer tools – from UI components, to data access, reporting and code improvement. A DevCraft bundle is the perfect companion in the journey to become a better software craftsman and create powerful web, mobile and desktop applications.

The DevCraft bundles, DevCraft Complete and DevCraft Ultimate replace the former Telerik Premium and Ultimate Collections, respectively.

ABOUT SITEFINITY

Sitefinity is Telerik's award-winning web content management and collaboration platform. Sitefinity brings an intuitive, drag and drop page design environment to business users while delivering high levels of developer productivity. Sitefinity powers more than 10,000 websites worldwide.

ABOUT TELERIK

Telerik is the market-leading provider of end-to-end solutions for application development, automated software testing, agile project management, reporting, and content management across all major Microsoft development platforms. Telerik is trusted by more than 100,000 customers worldwide for its innovation and industry-best technical support.

FIND OUT MORE

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