

Real Estate Giant CBRE Cuts Mobile App Dev Time by 50% with Progress

CASE STUDY

CBRE

INDUSTRY
Real Estate

PRODUCT
Kendo UI, Test Studio

Challenge

CB Richard Ellis (CBRE) is one of the world's premier full-service real estate companies, with 349 offices in 42 countries and over 44,000 employees. The company's \$223 billion in transactions span sales and leasing, loan originations, property and corporate facilities management and much more, making CBRE the global leader in real estate services and investment.

This broad scope of services creates logistical challenges preventing CBRE from effectively leveraging its vast information stores to generate value. For this, CBRE looks to its development team to build mobile applications for myriad purposes to support its business. These include apps for computing property valuations, estimating green energy savings, optimal location finders and more—all customized to support the unique needs of the global real estate giant. The company has over 100 mobile apps—some public facing—but most are unique to the company internal operations. If it can make staff more effective and efficient, CBRE has an app for it.

However, disparate development platforms scattered around the world made it difficult to maximize economies of scale. "We had an explosion of frameworks, patterns and stacks across the enterprise which caused critical issues in terms of maintainability, consistency and support," said Long Le, Principle App/Dev Architect, at CBRE. "We were looking to maximize our development resources for building apps, testing apps and delivering value to the business." The company needed a framework to deliver application portability to a spectrum of devices and operating systems, while at the same time, providing the "wow" factor field agents needed to close real estate deals. It was time for a change.

Solution

CBRE first instituted a review to standardize frameworks, patterns and technology stacks for mobile app creation onto one global platform. This would reduce development time and training, and enable more consistency across its app universe. Standardization also enabled easier app creation and maintenance since all apps would be built using the same framework. "We have development going on in Asia, EMEA, Australia and a lot of development going on within the U.S. This whole year has been spent standardizing that architecture and our technology stack across teams," said Le.

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Principle App/Dev
Architect, CBRE

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When CBRE application development shifted increasingly to HTML5 and CSS3, Progress Kendo UI made sense. The superior UI capabilities set Kendo UI apart. Nonetheless, the team still conducted a thorough review of the competitive landscape, just to be sure. After an exhaustive search, Le and his team landed back where they started: with Kendo UI tools. CBRE had a successful development history building public-facing applications with Telerik DevCraft, so between its prior success, industry research and fantastic UI results, it made sense to stay with Progress. “Everything that has to do with our HTML5 widgets and grids, most of which are the controls that you see when interfacing with one of our enterprise applications or web applications, is Kendo UI,” said Le.

The Kendo UI flexibility was key to the decision making process. CBRE has offices around the world, including Shanghai China, still using dated technologies such as Internet Explorer 8, Chrome2 and Windows XP. The capabilities of the Kendo UI tools to work across the varying degrees of technology were essential to make CBRE’s mobile vision work, especially in the age of bring-your-own-device practices. As Le put it, “You don’t need to worry about what kind of device, which machine, which browser or even which version you’re targeting. Progress just guarantees it all runs.”

Results

Since standardizing on the Kendo UI tools, CBRE developers use fewer resources to develop, fewer resources to test and fewer resources in the field to keep things consistent for a wide array of machines, browsers and versions.

“I would quantify development time savings of 35%-50% using Kendo UI tools,” said Le. “Being in the real estate industry, our applications are extremely CRUD heavy—e.g. grids, hierarchal trees and data visualizations. The Kendo UI suite is hands down the best framework to use for these types of use cases.”

Le also appreciates the versatility of building with the Kendo UI stack, confident in the knowledge it will run on whatever device selected—iPad, iPhone, Android tablet, Windows Phone, Mac or Windows desktop.

Based on its success with the Kendo UI tools, the CBRE team is now also adding Progress Telerik Test Studio to its standardization package to ensure the ongoing quality of the apps they produce. The development team at CBRE closely watches the technology landscape and appreciates the forward-thinking innovation happening at Progress, “We’re looking to Progress to provide some of the things we see coming in the future of development. We want to bring the automation, development efficiencies and the same line and consistency, from inception development, construction all the way down to testing, packaging and performance; we want the full software development lifecycle. That’s our next step and Progress will help to get us there.”

When asked to explain “Why Telerik,” Le had a concise reply, “If a team can start with Kendo UI and Test Studio tools and achieve the results in three weeks that would normally take months, why not?”



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