

# Solomon Group taps Mendix App Platform to run its fast-growing entertainment production business

Having grown from five to 180 employees in five years, earning a spot on the coveted Inc. 5,000 list, Solomon Group needed a better system to manage the unique workflows for its full-service entertainment design and production business. Migrating from Intuit QuickBase to the Mendix App Platform, a team of two non-coders quickly built two user-friendly applications that have consolidated all management processes, streamlining order flows and providing a backbone for future growth.

## Challenge

Solomon Group is a detail-oriented business. When it designs and produces an event like the Essence Music Festival in New Orleans or the FIRST Robotics Competition in St. Louis, it handles virtually every detail –from booking the venue to coordinating hotel stays, building the scenery in its fabrication shop and providing all of the multi-media equipment. And it does all this for dozens of projects at any given time.

To ensure that all of the firm’s 180 employees and multiple work functions stay on the same page, Solomon’s leaders did their best to leverage technologies at hand. Employees kept information in spreadsheets, Word documents and paper files. The company also used a custom app built with Intuit QuickBase, but found it “very limiting” and the user interface “extremely lacking,” Solomon partner Jonathan Foucheaux said. “With QuickBase, we couldn’t even change the color of the font on the screen. We had no flexibility to support our specific needs.”

Foucheaux said employees became so frustrated with the management systems that they stopped entering data, which left databases incomplete and forced project leaders to waste hours searching for information.



“Like other companies, Solomon Group has struggled to keep up with its rapid growth,” Foucheaux said. “When there were 10 or 20 of us in the same room, it was easy to figure out what was going on. Now that there are hundreds of us, we needed something more high-powered that would help streamline our processes and support our continued growth.”

## Solution

Solomon’s leaders went searching for a software package that would help run all aspects of their business but couldn’t find anything that suited their needs. They talked to a number of development shops and explored options for a custom-built system. They even contracted with a development business to build a prototype, but Foucheaux said it was “pretty underwhelming.”

“We found out during our search that it would have taken a lot of time to explain what we really need,” Foucheaux said. “There aren’t many companies like ours that do everything under one roof, and it was hard to communicate all the nuances to somebody outside of our industry. We decided to build it ourselves. So, we looked for a Rapid Application Development platform that would allow us to quickly build what we needed, with the sophistication and flexibility

that Intuit QuickBase lacked. Mendix was the clear answer.”

Foucheaux and the firm’s director of special projects, Conway Solomon, led the effort to build the project management application with Mendix. Using tutorials and just generally “tinkering” with the platform, Foucheaux said they got up to speed right away.

“Solomon Group is a tech-savvy company but none of us are coders,” he said. “That didn’t stop us from quickly learning how to build apps on the Mendix platform. With just a few months under my belt, I’m already at a point where I’d feel comfortable teaching a class on Mendix. It’s that easy to learn.”

## Results

Solomon started building the management app in January, and by April it was fully functional. Foucheaux said the new system organizes all of the project information in one system and links department workflows to each other, saving employees hundreds of hours per month by eliminating endless searches.

In the past, ordering services for different facets of an event was an arduous process involving multiple phone calls, order slips, looking up of prices and comparing specs of materials. Now, Foucheaux said, “Thanks to our ability to easily build sophisticated process logic with Mendix, you click on a project in the new app and it brings you exactly where you want to go. Instead of 30, 40, 50 clicks in our old QuickBase app, it’s just two clicks in our Mendix app.”

Foucheaux said the ability to update the app continuously – and quickly –has impressed both Solomon and outside vendors and partners. For example, he said, he made a quick change

*“Solomon Group is a tech-savvy company but none of us are coders. That didn’t stop us from quickly learning how to build apps on the Mendix platform. With just a few months under my belt, I’m already at a point where I’d feel comfortable teaching a class on Mendix. It’s that easy to learn.”*

**Jonathan Foucheaux**  
Partner, Solomon Group

on the fly during a Webex conference with marketers promoting a festival. During the call, they were discussing a popular comedian’s schedule, and one of the marketers asked for a list of all functions he was doing with sponsors. Using Mendix, Foucheaux crated a new page in the app – while the conference call was still going on.

Once the management system was done, Foucheaux said Solomon started work on a second app that will manage all the logistics for the 2015 Essence Music Festival in New Orleans. The company plans to share access with external vendors, making it easy for artists’ management reps to log in and share information regarding dressing room assignments, credentials, parking passes, bus availability, insurance certificates and a long list of additional details.

“Three months into it, I can definitely tell you Mendix was the right choice,” Foucheaux said. “It’s been really amazing. Going through the process of building the application and seeing it handle everything we wanted has been pretty cool. With Mendix, we have a platform that is driving significant business value today—and will support Solomon Group’s growth well into the future.”



[mendix.com](http://mendix.com) | +1 (857) 263-8200

Mendix is the app platform as a service company for the enterprise. We enable companies to build, integrate and deploy web and mobile applications faster and with better results, effectively driving ROI in days, not months.

© Mendix Inc. 2015. All Rights Reserved