

# Teraco Quickly Builds and Future Proofs Core Back-End System

Needing to support its rapid growth with a single, integrated system to manage CRM, operations and billing, Teraco initially evaluated commercial packages, but they would have required lengthy, costly customization to meet all its needs. Instead, Teraco used the Mendix platform to quickly and iteratively build the application – now the company’s core system – streamlining processes and facilitating its future growth.



## Challenge

When leading companies need world-class collocation facilities in South Africa for their IT infrastructure, they’re increasingly turning to Teraco Data Environments, a fast-growing, independent provider of secure cabinet space and reliable power. Given the quality and affordability of its telco-independent services, Teraco has enjoyed exceptional growth, with hundreds of customers operating out of its data centers in Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg.

Of course, that success creates its own challenges. In its high-growth mode, Teraco’s pace of business soon outstripped its mostly spreadsheet-driven back-office functions, creating growing delays for provisioning, billing and other key functions.

“As our business expanded, we gradually created separate little islands of semi-automation,” said Jan Hnizdo, chief financial officer for Teraco. “Sales, finance, and operations had different sets of information and they didn’t integrate at all. And to achieve true process integration – such as automated billing – we needed a single core system of record with KPI-driven dashboards. We initially looked at commercial packages, but none of the alternatives addressed all of our requirements without long, costly customization. We concluded that, for our business, the best approach was building exactly what we needed.”

## Solution

Searching for the right development environment, Teraco completed a thorough evaluation process. When a proof of concept with Mendix delivered a working prototype in less than a week – including integration with two existing systems – the company was sold on the power of the platform.

“We started Monday and by Friday, had a working application. It was quite incredible,” said Marc Forrest, Systems Manager at Teraco. “We were convinced that the Mendix App Platform would let us develop quickly and iteratively with a small team – which is what exactly we were looking for.”

With only two developers, Teraco built a core back-end system, called “Ozone,” that supports business processes across the entire organization, including CRM, operations and billing.

Collaborating closely with product owners, the team worked in weekly cycles, showing prototypes that kept key business stakeholders engaged throughout the project. In just a few months, the first version of the large application went live, with new functionality being added constantly.

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development. Building the same application using traditional methods would have taken a lot longer and cost a lot more.”

## Results

Today, the Mendix-powered Ozone is Teraco’s core back-end system, helping the company to manage sales, operations and billing. For instance, Ozone seamlessly connects to a back-end database to collect and present daily data from power devices in each customer cabinet in the collocation centers – data that fuels order processing and billing workflows. Ozone helps Teraco keep track of thousands of service orders for hundreds of customers. And the billing process that previously took as long as 10-12 days is now largely automated.

“Thanks to Mendix, all of our major business processes are faster,” said Sam Tudor-Owen, Financial Manager at Teraco. “We can generate sales proposals faster. We can provision cabinets to our customers faster. And we can send invoices faster. We have faster cycles – from time the customer orders service to the time the cabinet is available.” In fact, most customers also directly and securely access the Mendix application via a self-service portal to view account-specific usage data, create support tickets and better control costs.

“As we continue to grow substantially, our Mendix-powered system is playing a key role for our company, added Emmi Nicholl, Head of Risk & Compliance at Teraco. “If we didn’t have this core system, we’d be swamped by our current volumes. From a strategic perspective, the application is also providing significantly more valuable reporting

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**Marc Forrest**  
Systems Manager  
Teraco Data Environments

and analytics as well. It highlights any gaps in our processes and lets us respond much faster.”

In addition to constantly making small tweaks to the application, Teraco is looking to extend access to employees in the field. For instance, given that fact that Mendix easily enables multi-device apps, one project on the horizon is building a tablet application for technical workers in its collocation centers to complete routine checklists and other tasks.

## About Teraco

Teraco is the first provider of resilient, vendor neutral data environments in South Africa. Clients benefit from the cost savings and improved resilience of securely housing their information systems and networking equipment in a collocation facility purpose-built and operated to global best practice by an expert organisation with an absolute focus on data centre technology and infrastructure.



Mendix helps enterprises achieve their digital goals. Our digital innovation platform empowers customers to bring new products to market, digitize customer engagement, and automate unique business processes. Facilitating an iterative, collaborative approach, the platform brings business and IT together to build and deploy innovative applications at the speed of ideas.

A recognized market leader, Mendix is helping hundreds of customers across dozens of industries achieve exceptional results. For more information, visit [www.mendix.com](http://www.mendix.com) and follow us on Twitter [@Mendix](#).