The Footprints Difference

PRINTS®

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Footprints, Inc. is a consulting firm specializing in the development of custom information management systems for Mobile, Web and Desktop. We have developed numerous successful custom information systems and database applications for a wide variety of clients throughout our more than 30-year history.

Footprints values high-quality solutions that are cost-effective for our clients. There are many off the shelf applications available today. Even so, nothing can beat a Footprints custom information management solution developed specifically and exclusively for your information management needs.

Many of Footprints projects have been based in 4D technologies, as Footprints is the oldest and most experienced, premier 4D specialists in the nation. That said, *our clients have not been limited* to 4D-only technologies. We have developed web-based applications, added native iOS and Android apps that interface with our custom information solutions, provided significant systems and system components on the .NET platform, implemented numerous forms of connectivity to other databases and company systems, as well as provided complete "standards-based" and open source based systems.

Whether you are in the office or on the go, a Footprints custom information system and Footprints' outstanding customer service will prove its worth to you for years to come.

Footprints' methodologies are time-proven.

As developers of custom information systems, Footprints methodologies are finely tuned to work in an interactive, cooperative partnership between Footprints and each customer. Our approach has withstood the test of time.

The primary tenets that continue to shape Footprints' philosophy of customer service are: defined project management practices, defined programming standards, valued personnel, and most importantly a value for truly listening to and understanding what our customers are saying. We believe that software should be made to fit the needs of the business, rather than forcing the business to fit the software. We build your software to make your jobs easier, so you can focus on what is truly important. These tenets provide Footprints with the foundation and tools by which we help our clients translate their unique and particular business needs into practical, cost-effective solutions.

Footprints applies appropriate technologies and industry best practices with common sense, to address each and every need our customers present to us. Footprints' results for our clients have been unparalleled, cost-effective, predictable and reliable, with each project/subproject goal met frequently within cost and/or schedule estimates.

We start with listening and seeking to fully understand.

Software development requires effective and efficient communication to occur in order for any endeavor to have a beneficial outcome with regard to functionality, cost and/or schedule. Our mantra for success: *"Software Development is Communication."*

Footprints' development process begins with a thorough and detailed analysis of your requirements and present flow of information. We start with listening and seeking to clearly and accurately understand what you are trying to accomplish. This initial phase may include an on-site visit to collect data and meet with and solicit input from potential users. In many instances, necessary information can be provided via email and/or virtual meetings. Often, discussions with key personnel may reveal nuances that lead to more favorable outcomes that would not otherwise be discovered.

Interactive communication is an ongoing process that starts before the first line of code is written and continues through the life of the project.

Client participation is crucial to success.

Throughout the process of designing and developing the software, we continually solicit feedback from you, the customer. In this way, we can discover and address any potential course corrections that may be needed to meet desired objectives *before* such changes become too costly to correct.

Active client participation streamlines the feedback loop, resulting in software more attuned to the actual needs, delivered quicker and at lower cost. Development schedules for custom software are highly dependent on the level of participation and communication client and developer.

We design a system to meet your needs.

Our team of experienced database developers and programmers reviews the information we gather, and design the overall architecture, user interface, and rough supporting database schema. This constitutes perhaps the most critical phase of the project since it forms the foundation for all subsequent development and programming efforts. A descriptive outline – usually in the form of the textual content of an initial on- line help system – is drafted, with supporting mockups, to provide a detailed description of each element of the interface.

We develop to a defined set of coding standards

Footprints team, in supporting the project manager, all works to a similarly strict set of published programming standards covering all facets of program development including naming conventions, code documentation and program structure. All interface elements are designed to adhere to normal expectations of the platform unless otherwise requested by the client. Programming standards ensure that your final application can be read and supported by *any* experienced programmer, now or ten years from now.

The importance of standards cannot be overstated. If you have worked with another consultant, you are probably all too aware that programmers come and go, often leaving you with no support. The

Footprints system of project management and execution ensures that your software will address the issues you feel are important today and that Footprints will be here tomorrow to support your project.

Frequent, iterative releases.

Once we have developed this initial design and have reviewed, clarified and refined it with you, we break down the work into small subprojects that can be completed in short order. We do this because of strong evidence that the smaller the subproject is, the greater the chance of a successful and well-accepted outcome for our customers and the end users of the custom systems we create for them.

Putting working software in front of key personnel sooner is critical to receiving quality feedback and ensuring the solution developed is the solution desired.

Early and often end-user testing is crucial.

All Footprints custom information management solutions are thoroughly tested by our QA personnel prior to release to the client, yet only actual users can provide "real world" testing necessary to identify problems early in the development cycle. Regrettably, unlike software manufacturers such as Microsoft (once a Footprints client) who may have many hundreds of beta test sites, custom software has but one beta test site – the customer.

Our practice of frequent, iterative releases that users receive early and often to test goes a long way toward reducing training costs. In fact, the quickest development cycle results from a high level of user testing and feedback throughout the entire process, and greatly increases the chance for end user acceptance.

Changes are sought early and managed cooperatively

In the course of developing software, when changes are not expected, the project is likely to fail. The tight release-feedback cycles Footprints uses offer multiple opportunities to review the direction of the system's design and implementation. Significant changes in

anticipated direction – whether they come from new requirements, clarifications of expectations, or other factors – are sought out in the early phases of the project. It is far less costly to change intentions than it is to change established code.

Footprints provides a built-in Feedback management system with each custom development project, enabling you and us to cooperatively manage all kinds of changes, from large directional changes to small requests and bug reports.

Project Management Approach

The preceding discussion covers just about all aspects of our Project Management Approach.

We use common sense approaches to project management and software development that allows Footprints to respond with agility to our customers' ever-changing priorities and business requirements in a timely manner. In fact, we have worked this way long before "Agile" was a technology buzzword or methodology. We continually learn from and apply the best of the industry's practices without getting caught up in the latest hype about the next "silver bullet" method, tool or technology.

Footprints' practice is to break down each request made of us, estimate its impact in terms of cost and schedule. These estimates consist of ranges and are continually reviewed between Footprints' and our client project managers as work on them progresses. Nonetheless, we pride ourselves on establishing reasonable estimates (schedule and cost) for each project and subproject, and for being reliable in meeting those estimates. The smaller the subproject is, the greater the chance of a successful and well-accepted outcome for our clients.

Footprints uses its own project management system to oversee project development and programming tasks. Client requests and end user feedback is encouraged by way of the interactive feedback system we build into all our custom information systems.

Our relationships with our customers is channeled through communication between designated project contacts on both sides – a Footprints project manager and a client project manager.

Training Approach

More often than not, a Footprints custom information management solution requires minimal end user training. Custom information management systems are designed to be readily understood and to encourage self-learning. Your application would be designed to reflect how you work, not force you to adapt to the software.

Footprints' practice of frequent deliverables gives our customers' end users a chance to readily digest what's new or changed in a way that helps minimize the amount of end user training that may be required. This practice translates into employee efficiency savings – they don't have to take too much time away from their jobs to learn how to use the software. Compare that approach to one used by typical software development approaches – a completed application is delivered and a user is expected to learn how to use all the features of a new program quickly.

Location, Location, Location

Footprints operates three offices. Headquartered along the Silicon Slopes of Salt Lake City, Utah, Footprints provide full service project management, support and software development in Utah and Central Pennsylvania (Hollidaysburg). Our administrative office is located in scenic Moab, Utah. The same "long distance" techniques used to provide close client support enables all Footprints offices to function effectively as a single cohesive organization.

Contact Footprints, Inc. Today

Footprints, Inc. is ready to tackle your custom information system development needs today! Give us a call or send us an email to begin to experience the Footprints Difference.

Contact Information

Footprints, Inc.
201 East 5900 South, Suite 103
Murray UT 84107
801.281.1945

Eastern Operations
PO Box 596
Hollidaysburg PA 16648

Administrative Office
121 East 100 South, Suite 107
Moab UT 84532
801.281.1945 x100

www.footprints-inc.com
info@footprints-inc.com
Toll free: 855.227.2271

Executive Developers:

Scott Gelvin
scott@footprints-inc.com

Philip Keth
fpeast@footprints-inc.com

Warren Thornock
warren@footprints-inc.com