

Software Innovators From A to Z Series: Skire's on Fire

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BY BRUCE RICHARDSON, CHIEF RESEARCH OFFICER

Earlier this month, I stopped by the Menlo Park headquarters of **Skire**, a 10-year-old project management software firm founded by Massy Mehdipour. Ms. Mehdipour's firm is somewhat of an anomaly in Silicon Valley as it managed to grow to more than 100 employees and \$20M in annual revenue without any current outside investors.

Ms. Mehdipour started the firm with several other co-workers from **Bechtel**, the large engineering, construction, and project management firm. Skire's first applications were for cost management and workflow. The firm then added scheduling and resource management. Facility and real estate management followed. For each new application set, Skire partnered with a blue-chip firm. For example, the costing applications were developed with a semiconductor leader, scheduling with a biotech pioneer, and resource management with a top life sciences firm.

Speaking of customers, we spent a fair amount of time talking about Skire's success across verticals. The company has amassed an impressive list of Fortune 500 firms in oil and gas, consumer goods, banking, paper products, casinos and gaming equipment, chemicals, power and utilities, life sciences, industrial products, and the public sector. The latter includes airports; counties, cities, and states; hospitals; and universities.

As I looked at the customer list, I was not surprised to see that the firm shared many clients with **SAP**. Ms. Mehdipour said that the two vendors they see most within customer organizations are SAP and **PeopleSoft**, now part of **Oracle**. Ironically, last month [Oracle bought Primavera](#), an occasional bidder against Skire for project management software. Given Oracle's strategy of buying vendors with a strong SAP presence, the acquisition team might have been better off driving a short way south on 101 to take a long look at Skire.

Today, Skire's Unifier software includes business process automation, cost manager, schedule manager, document manager, resource manager, and asset manager, with a performance management layer on top. This includes dashboards, reports, and alerts. Unifier sits on Skire's platform which supports enterprise administration, application configuration, and all third-party integration including enterprise applications.

Skire can be deployed to support the entire project, facility and real estate lifecycle from initial construction to ongoing maintenance. While it may not be obvious, a residential or commercial complex that costs \$2B to build may likely require \$200M per year in maintenance. That provides a nice long tail for Skire usage

Skire's software can be deployed on premise or on demand, with most customers opting for the Skire-as-a-service route. A typical initial deal might be in the \$500K to \$1M range, not including the long tail.

As we talked, I wondered why lenders and/or governors had yet to insist that the engineering and construction firms use Skire to ensure that projects are completed on time and on budget. Ironically, the very next day [The New York Times reported](#) that the infrastructure costs for the new stadiums for the Yankees and Mets had risen to \$458M today from an estimated \$281M in 2005. And this doesn't include the estimated \$480M in tax breaks granted for the two teams.

I would imagine things might have gone a bit differently if New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg had been able to track the progress and costs on his specially-built Skire dashboard. In the future, taxpayers may also have access to similar capabilities for large capital projects, a la Boston's own Big Dig. Talk about transparency in government.