



## **SCS Case Study Business Modeling and Web Application**

### ***The Client***

A residential construction firm in the greater Twin Cities area with many years experience often came up against the same obstacle – how does one construction company keep enough capital to carry numerous, quality, residential lots in inventory? Keep too few and your potential customer won't contract with you to build their home because you can't offer a good lot in the right location. Keep too many lots in your inventory and tie up large amounts of capital and incur a heavy property tax burden.

### ***The Challenge***

The construction firm envisioned an online market place where buyers and sellers of residential lots could come together. This market place would consist of a membership group. The members would be other residential construction firms. These firms would advertise the residential lots they owned via the market place. In this way one construction firm could peruse the thousands of lots in inventory and potentially find dozens of options that would suit the prospective home buyer.

The members of the market place, which became known as Builders Lot Exchange, needed a software application that would enable them to join the market place and manage their memberships. Members would enter property information, such as physical location and size and other construction attributes. The market place application would serve as the vehicle for searching for properties which met the user's criteria, and the application would enable buyers and sellers to conduct negotiations for the sale/purchase of the property.

### ***The Solution***

Superior Consulting Services (SCS) and the construction firm seeking to launch the Builders Lot Exchange (BLE) came together to plan how such an endeavor might be launched. The fact that a web application was needed was obvious. The fact that this web application would effectively be BLE's entire interface to its customer was not lost. The application would have to be sturdy, quick, and very intuitive to use. The target audience for the web application consisted of a group that could include members whose technology exposure might be on the lower side of the average.

A web application using Microsoft ASP.NET, SQL Server and Microsoft's web server (IIS) would fill the bill. Superior Consulting's business analysts worked side by side with the client's visionaries to define the processes that would be essential to creating a successful business launch. Over the course of several weeks and numerous design sessions, the model for the business began to take shape. Administrative roles for the market place's management team were stated, and membership functionality and responsibilities were defined. The tools to support each of these were designed by the SCS team. A collaborative effort yielded a solid application that would serve the needs of the market place staff and its members.

### ***The Result***

SCS system engineers then got busy to bring the whole thing to life. A user interface was built to map out the look and feel of the application. Database specialists put together the plumbing which would hook the front end interface to the database. The project team at Superior followed their

Superior Methodology and constructed a project plan that would provide a common road map for the team members.

As a new venture for the client, this project presented some unique constraints to the Superior project team. The residential building industry is quite cyclical and fall is a major peak for the business. In order to beat that peak in the cycle, BLE and the development team had just three months to not only build the application, but to layout the business model itself and identify tools which would serve the administration team - for business processes that had never been performed. Also, as a start up operation, capital was at a premium. The project plan left little room for rework; things had to be done right the first time and on budget. The client and the development team leadership partnered up all the way through the development and launch of the business. Neither group could have been successful without the continual input and feedback of the other.

Today Builders Lot Exchange boasts nearly 150 members with thousands of properties in inventory. Members benefit from a rich choice of properties and locations from which their customers can choose. The more choices a BLE member can offer, the more likely that member is to land the home building contract with their customer.