

Pitney Bowes MapInfo Transforms Its Global Licensing Capabilities



Pitney Bowes MapInfo, part of Pitney Bowes Inc., is the leading global provider of location intelligence solutions, integrating software, data and services.

Used in more than 60 countries, MapInfo's products are developed in a creative environment that embraces innovative ideas, teamwork and customer focus. These values were top of mind for MapInfo's licensing professionals when they set out to globally transform the company's software licensing strategy — and chose Flexera's Software Monetization solutions as MapInfo's enabling technology.



CHALLENGE

- Tracking and analyzing product usage
- Creating a consistent customer experience
- Increasing efficiency of licensing operations



SOLUTION

- Implement a universal licensing system across multiple products
- Centralize entitlement management to allow automation and data gathering



BENEFITS

- Operations managed by a single tracking system
- Access to accurate, global product usage data
- New options for customer self-service and trials

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CHUCK SCHWERIN

—SR. PRODUCT MANAGER OF LICENSING TECHNOLOGIES, MAPINFO

Providing location intelligence to over 7,000 businesses and government organizations around the world, Pitney Bowes MapInfo was the first vendor to develop, in 1986, desktop mapping software that provides users with a data analysis and visualization tool. Today, MapInfo is a global organization, developing the world’s leading location intelligence software, data, online tools and professional services to help organizations in a wide range of sectors make more profitable decisions.

Licensing transformation: Communication is key

At the time MapInfo decided to overhaul its licensing practices, there were no universal policies, and certificate-based licensing was only present in a few versions of a few products. MapInfo had no ability to track those entitlements other than with an internally developed, manual system. The licensing team knew a licensing transformation would benefit both MapInfo and its customers, but would touch partners, customers and internal stakeholders at many different levels. Extensive communication with each group therefore would be essential. “We knew we would be gaining advantages by universally automating product licensing, but we wanted to make the transformation as seamless as possible for our customers and colleagues,” Sr. Product Manager Chuck Schwerin says. “We decided that communicating, even over communicating, at every turn would help each group anticipate the changes that would take place in their organization.”

Choosing the best solution

The MapInfo team selected Flexera based largely on three factors:

- **Financial:** The team’s due diligence showed that using Flexera Software’s solutions to improve the licensing and activation process, and expand the license models available to MapInfo customers, could result in a powerful return on investment

(ROI). “We were persuaded by compelling evidence in the marketplace that other companies were benefiting financially by using Flexera Software licensing and back office software, so we decided to select it as our technology as well,” Schwerin says.

- **Technical:** MapInfo wanted one code base and one process for its licensing software worldwide, as opposed to, for example, a product line that had separate protected, unprotected and demo versions.
- **Customer experience:** Offering advanced, secure licensing technology would create more options for customers. “Interoperability is a core competency for us. We felt we were well-positioned to take what Flexera Software had and integrate it with our product line and create a combined offering that would be attractive to our customers,” comments Schwerin.

The MapInfo team chose two solutions from Flexera: FlexNet Publisher would be used as their general licensing technology. FlexNet Operations would automate license generation and entitlement management, and integrate with MapInfo’s back-end financial systems for reporting, tracking and analysis.

A smooth transition to FlexNet Licensing

The MapInfo engineering team worked closely with Flexera Software Professional Services to familiarize themselves with the changes required to implement activation style licensing. An important issue during the deployment was assuring that revenue recognition should not be slowed down by the new licensing process. In order for MapInfo to be able to recognize revenue from a sale of MapInfo Professional, customers had to have everything available to them to use the software when they opened the box. Although MapInfo Professional updates were delivered electronically, new purchases were delivered by CD. It was critical that the new form of automated licensing not affect MapInfo’s ability to recognize revenue.

Universal licensing delivers universal benefits

Using FlexNet Publisher and FlexNet Operations, MapInfo has implemented a common engineering approach to licensing and entitlement management across its product line, with minimal impact to customers. Additional benefits include:

- More effective day-to-day operations: The new licensing system helps the team achieve consistencies globally across offices, and improve order processing.
- Improved management of remote operations: The licensing team uses FlexNet Operations to integrate with the multiple instances of the financial system used by different regions, allowing these remote operations to be centrally tracked and managed.
- Accurate statistics and reports on customer activation and usage: According to Schwerin, the activation and usage statistics are now considerably more accurate than prior to the implementation of Flexera's technology. "Our internally developed tracking system wasn't adequate enough to give our customers a comfort level to know if they were accounting for all the seats that were used in the field. Today, we have instantaneous report capabilities that provide data by customer and entitlement," he says.

Specifically, the licensing team instantaneously knows to what degree customers are using MapInfo Professional, and when activation and usage begins. This allows MapInfo to improve maintenance, technical support and training programs, and understand when the programs should begin and end. All of this data can now be shared with MapInfo's sales teams, which can use it to plan intelligent licensing strategies.

"Being able to learn how many seats were purchased and to what degree they're being used has been valuable to our customers. The service extends MapInfo's capabilities to be a trusted advisor to our customers who ask for assistance with accounting and auditing their license use," says Schwerin.

Today, the MapInfo licensing team is confident in their decision to incorporate FlexNet Publisher licensing and use FlexNet Operations as their entitlement management solution, having significantly improved internal operations and brought greater value to customers.

NEXT STEP

See how Flexera can help transform your business.

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