



## Software Firm Uses Cloud Data Solution to Promote Real-Time Intelligence for Business

### Overview

**Country or Region:** United States

**Industry:** Software engineering

### Partner Profile

JackBe helps organizations make smart, fast business decisions using Presto, the company's award-winning real-time intelligence solution. Based in Chevy Chase, Maryland, JackBe has 60 employees.

### Business Situation

JackBe sought to enhance Presto by better supporting cloud technology and by complementing customers' internal data with a wider variety of reliable cloud-based external data.

### Solution

JackBe incorporated DataMarket, a part of Windows Azure Marketplace, into Presto, giving customers easy access to a centralized catalog of trusted data sources.

### Benefits

- Rapid solution deployment to support faster decision making
- Centralized access to trusted, valuable information sources
- Increased business value through partnering with Microsoft

"DataMarket offers rich, real-time data in one central place, and Presto from JackBe makes that data contextual and relevant for decision making in an incredibly dynamic business world."

Luis Derechin, Chief Executive Officer, JackBe

JackBe is an expert in providing Real-Time Intelligence (RTI) for timely business decision making. With the increasing popularity of cloud computing, JackBe recognized the need to run its Presto RTI solution suite on a reliable cloud platform and to make cloud-based data sources available through Presto. The company chose the Windows Azure platform and was particularly impressed with DataMarket, a part of Windows Azure Marketplace. JackBe found that DataMarket interoperates easily with Presto, promoting rapid deployment of RTI solutions and conserving IT resources. Presto now combines customers' existing data sources with the centralized, trusted, diverse sources in DataMarket and presents the information in a meaningful, actionable form that increases business value, speeds up decision making, and boosts business efficiency and agility.



Windows Azure™  
Marketplace  
DataMarket

“The fact that Windows Azure is evolving so quickly, and the amount and types of information in DataMarket are constantly expanding, make the platform ideal for us and our customers.”

Dan Malks, Vice President for App Platform Engineering, JackBe

## Situation

Founded in 2003, JackBe, part of the Microsoft Partner Network, has deployed Real-Time Intelligence (RTI) solutions to more than 100 enterprise and government customers around the world. These JackBe customers have real-time information needs that are dependent on internal and external data, both of which can be easily managed through Presto, the company's flagship RTI product.

Dan Malks, Vice President for App Platform Engineering at JackBe, explains, “Too often, organizations have data that is ‘siloes’ or comes from a variety of internal and external sources, and they're not able to quickly pull this information together into a unified view that decision makers can use and share. As a result, the data isn't as valuable as it could be, and it doesn't allow businesses to make accurate, timely judgments.”

That's where Presto comes in, delivering portable RTI Apps and providing tools to easily assemble them into complete RTI solutions in minutes or hours, unlike traditional business intelligence solutions that can take months or years to deploy. Organizations can use Presto Apps for a variety of RTI goals and tasks, such as operations management, situational awareness, departmental and organizational transparency and accountability, geospatial awareness, monitoring key performance indicators, and implementing 360-degree operational dashboards.

JackBe continually strives to make it easy for customers to access data from a variety of sources, and the company sees cloud-based platforms as increasingly important for importing data and delivering RTI solutions that operate on that data. “The business value proposition of the cloud is

now well established,” says Malks. “With cloud computing, organizations can create scalable solutions quickly, without requiring the traditional internal investment in IT expertise, server provisioning, and so on. As our customers move to the cloud, we have to be ready for them.” To maintain this customer readiness, JackBe sought a reliable cloud platform with which Presto could easily interoperate and, just as critically, from which it could easily consume accurate data to use with Presto Apps.

## Solution

In late 2009, JackBe began proof-of-concept cloud development, building Presto Apps that could run on the Windows Azure platform and connect to data sources within the platform as well as to traditional data services and relational databases. JackBe was particularly interested in DataMarket, an information marketplace within the Windows Azure platform that brings data, imagery, and real-time web services from leading commercial data providers and authoritative public data sources together into a single location, under a unified provisioning and billing framework.

Before choosing the Windows Azure platform, JackBe considered Google App Engine and Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (Amazon EC2). “Google App Engine was too limited from a programming language perspective. And neither had the most critical element: a data market of valuable real-time information sources,” says Malks. “Also, given our customers' interest in Microsoft-delivered information sources and in maintaining their IT heterogeneity, we decided that it was important to create solutions that run on Windows Azure. Finally, the fact that Windows Azure is evolving so quickly and the amount and types of information in DataMarket are

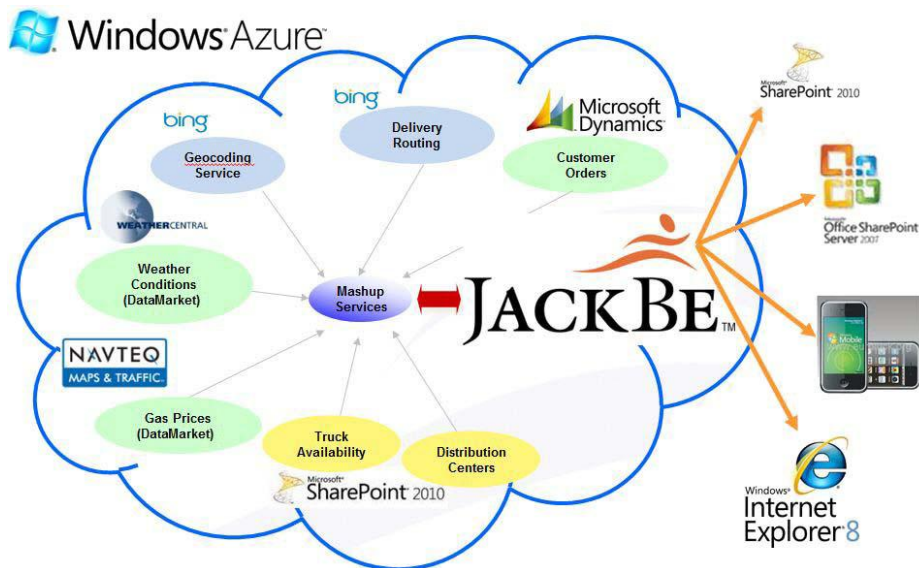


Figure 1. The concept: JackBe Presto draws information from many sources, including DataMarket, to help a hypothetical company deliver products more efficiently.

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In mid-2010, JackBe worked with Microsoft to complete a dynamic dashboard of Presto Apps created from DataMarket and other services to help a hypothetical perishable foods company manage shipments as they travel from warehouse to purchaser. This proof-of-concept solution incorporates several Microsoft and third-party products and technologies, such as Bing Maps and NAVTEQ dynamic routing information, on-demand customer order data through Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online, and real-time Weather Central information visualized through the Microsoft Silverlight browser technology. In addition, JackBe used Microsoft SharePoint Online to aggregate information on delivery trucks and their locations, and used DataMarket to provide dynamic fuel prices and geographically correlated fuel station locations.

Malks says, “In this hypothetical example, disparate sets of information are seen in one single view so that a company can accurately track its shipments based on changing conditions. This truly shows the value of a strong information ecosystem combined with a secure platform to quickly assemble and view live information.” He notes that, without Presto or DataMarket, existing applications could provide similar information but would require users to move among several screens, increasing the chance of mistakes and wasting valuable labor to track each shipment.

Because Presto can accept data from a variety of sources, including any relational database, third-party information vendors, DataMarket, and Open Data Protocol (OData) sources, the example solution could be modified to accommodate many different types of business scenarios. Malks notes that DataMarket is a particularly important component of this flexibility strategy and was very easy to integrate into Presto: “We want to help customers access actionable data, no matter what the data is. As soon as DataMarket was live, we were able to pull information from it. From a technical perspective, we are easily able to use the protocols that DataMarket exposes, so there was nothing special that we had to enable in Presto to work with DataMarket.” As a result, all JackBe customers now have complete access to the full catalog of DataMarket information as they create their RTI Apps using Presto.

### Benefits

By partnering with Microsoft to make DataMarket information available through Presto, JackBe is able to support rapid deployment of real-time intelligence Apps for faster business decision making, and give customers centralized access to a wider variety of trusted intelligence sources. The result is added value for

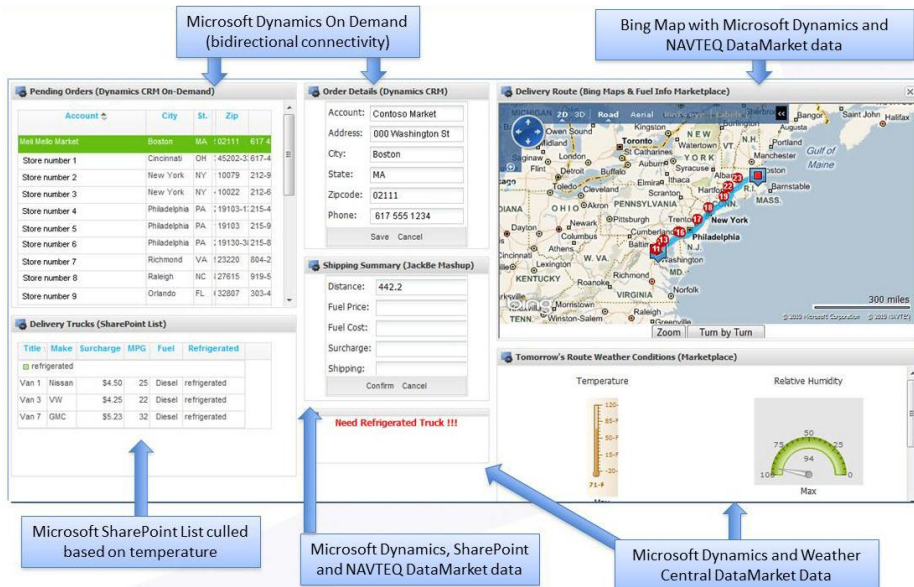


Figure 2. The implementation: Presto Apps combine and display both stored and real-time information in dashboard form to support quick decision making.

customers as Presto takes raw data in DataMarket and combines it with their existing data to make the information more relevant, contextual, and usable.

### Rapid, Flexible Solution Deployment to Support Faster Decision Making

JackBe designed Presto with easy App development in mind, and it maintained this approach as it made DataMarket information available to Presto users. Malks says, "When organizations use Presto to take advantage of DataMarket, they usually want to minimize development—to create a low-code solution, so we have wizards and visual tools to drag and drop DataMarket information into an App and easily combine it with information from other sources. People build their applications in this visual environment and combine them with out-of-the-box Presto Apps to assemble complete RTI solutions."

JackBe lets customers use a variety of development tools as they develop applications based on Presto and

DataMarket naturally fit into that flexible approach. "Presto brings data together from many internal and external sources and combines it into a single feed that is easily customizable to fit a specific business purpose, which makes a lot of business sense," says Malks. "Then, to further support customer flexibility, we can deliver that data in many different ways—using everything from HTML5 to Microsoft Silverlight." He notes that from a power-user perspective, it's a straightforward process to deploy even complex solutions rapidly. As a result, decision makers get the RTI they need while the company invests only hours or minutes of labor, instead of the weeks or months of traditional IT development approaches. And for Apps that require developer assistance, developers can manually write code and access DataMarket APIs in Presto, if they wish, to further enhance the Apps using essentially any development tool or language.

### Centralized Access to Trusted, Valuable Information Sources

The DataMarket catalog is large, and the number of publishers that contribute data to it continues to grow. Information ranges from weather, location and mapping, and commodity prices to statistics and studies from government agencies and the United Nations. "The expansiveness of the data within DataMarket is impressive, especially as we look at the future potential of a large community of organizations contributing to it," says Malks. "For us, a dataset is a dataset, whether it comes from Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Microsoft SQL Azure, an Oracle database, or DataMarket. However, the information in DataMarket is especially valuable because of its richness, diversity, accuracy, and the ease of access to it." Emphasizing the ready access to DataMarket information, Malks continues, "Today, many decision makers spend half

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their time just looking for the right data, even before they can act on it. DataMarket speeds the decision-making process by providing a central place where they can find whatever data they need for different purposes, saving time and increasing efficiency.”

Malks also describes the importance of centralized billing that the one-stop model of DataMarket supports: “In the past, if a company needed data from many providers, it would have to set up several accounts with multiple vendors, each with different terms and conditions, and each billing separately. With DataMarket, the company can set up one account with a trusted vendor—that means increased data variety and governance and simplified billing.”

Luis Derechin, Chief Executive Officer at JackBe, adds, “From a trust perspective, users feel they can rely on the accuracy of the trusted data sources available in DataMarket. They can also feel confident that this cloud resource will be highly available and will scale to meet their needs.”

#### **Increased Business Value Through Partnering with Microsoft**

JackBe sees working with Microsoft to make DataMarket an integral part of Presto as an essential strategy in its mission to give customers the information they need to make better business decisions faster. That customer benefit, in turn, gives JackBe a more competitive edge. Malks says, “Access to data that was never available before and the ability to discover it quickly and easily are important competitive drivers for our customers. Consequently, we’re excited to help them take advantage of DataMarket information through the convenience of the cloud in general and through Presto in particular.”

“Microsoft strongly believes that partners can enhance the value of its software, and we believe that as well,” Derechin adds. “JackBe solutions complement and extend several Microsoft offerings, including SharePoint technologies, Microsoft Dynamics CRM, and Windows Azure Marketplace. DataMarket offers rich, real-time data in one central place, and Presto from JackBe makes that data contextual and relevant for decision making in an incredibly dynamic business world.”

Malks concludes, “By bringing Presto and DataMarket together, some of the traditional technical challenges of managing multiple data sources—IT work to handle multiple feeds, formats, and so on—aren’t challenges anymore. As a result, for customers, development becomes easier, they get their real-time intelligence faster, and they achieve business benefits much quicker. For JackBe, being able to provide added value to DataMarket information from Microsoft—an established vendor with a great ecosystem of customers and providers—is a great place to be. It’s a win, win, win: for us, Microsoft, and our mutual customers.”

## For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to:

[www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)

For more information about JackBe products and services, call (240) 744-7620 or visit the website at:

[www.jackbe.com](http://www.jackbe.com)

## Windows Azure Platform

The Windows Azure platform provides an excellent foundation for expanding online product and service offerings. The components include:

- **Microsoft SQL Azure.** Microsoft SQL Azure offers the first cloud-based relational and self-managed database service built on Microsoft SQL Server technologies.
- **Windows Azure.** Windows Azure is the development, service hosting, and service management environment for the Windows Azure platform. Windows Azure provides developers with on-demand compute, storage, and bandwidth, and a content distribution network to host, scale, and manage web applications through Microsoft data centers.
- **Windows Azure AppFabric.** With Windows Azure AppFabric, developers can build and manage applications more easily both on-premises and in the cloud.
  - *AppFabric Service Bus* connects services and applications across network boundaries to help developers build distributed applications.
  - *AppFabric Access Control* provides federated, claims-based access control for REST web services.
- **Windows Azure Marketplace DataMarket.** Developers and information workers can use the new service DataMarket to easily discover,

purchase, and manage premium data subscriptions in the Windows Azure platform.

To learn more, visit:

<https://datamarket.azure.com>

## Software and Services

- Windows Azure Platform
  - Windows Azure
  - Windows Azure Marketplace DataMarket
- Microsoft Online Services
  - Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online
  - Microsoft SharePoint Online
- Technologies
  - Bing Maps Platform
  - Microsoft Silverlight