



Open Source at Microsoft

Aras Drives Performance in Product Life-Cycle Processes

Built on the Microsoft® .NET Framework, Aras Innovator enterprise open-source software automates new product introduction, advanced product quality planning, and product life-cycle management for companies in many industries.

From high-tech and consumer goods to pharmaceutical and automotive companies, businesses must launch innovative new products on time while ensuring quality and profitability. Businesses must also contend with increasingly narrow windows of opportunity in the marketplace, intensifying competition, growing compliance complexity, cost pressures, and shorter development cycles.

With so much at stake, industry-leading companies like the Freudenberg Group are continually seeking to improve new product introduction, quality compliance, and risk management to satisfy customers and achieve profitable growth. Several years ago, executives at Freudenberg recognized that the \$7 billion company's competitive success hinged on achieving better visibility and improved collaboration across its global facilities.

"The Freudenberg strategies of innovation leadership and operational excellence are designed to deliver profitable growth that exceeds our aggressive goals. We needed to enable our teams to collaborate effectively while ensuring compliance," says Tom Gill, a director at the Freudenberg Group. "Besides having to comply with a wide variety of requirements, such as advanced product quality planning, we needed to improve launch performance while achieving compliance."

Freudenberg found an effective solution in the Aras Innovator enterprise open-source software suite from Aras Corporation, headquartered in Massachusetts. Built entirely on Framework, Aras Innovator automates new product introduction, advanced product quality planning (APQP), and enterprise product life-cycle management for product-based companies of all sizes in a wide range of industries. Service-based organizations, including educational institutions and government agencies, are also turning to Aras Innovator for business-process management to manage the life cycles of projects, services, and assets.

Microsoft Enterprise Open Source

Aras Innovator is available as Microsoft enterprise open-source software, meaning that companies download the production-ready software at no charge, with complete access for an unlimited number of users. Aras Innovator employs a *model-based*, service-oriented architecture (SOA) with XML Web services technology to achieve unmatched flexibility.

Companies can then quickly deploy and easily adapt the enterprise software solutions to their unique business needs. Aras provides enterprise-class support, consulting, and training services to help organizations achieve business results.

“Providing Microsoft enterprise open-source software as a service makes the Aras solutions exceptionally easy for companies to use and eliminates the need for a large, up-front investment,” says Peter Schroer, president of Aras Corporation. “Aras enterprise open-source software solutions enable companies to take advantage of existing Microsoft skill sets and infrastructure while realizing the licensing flexibility and IT control of open source.”

Project teams use Aras Innovator to collaborate on deliverables, track program costs, and manage project

risks. “Change-management workflows coordinate activities, and document-management capabilities provide Web-based access to files and important information to provide all stakeholders with a single version of the truth about the project status,” adds Schroer. Aras Innovator’s failure mode and effects analysis (FMEA) functionality helps identify and mitigate potential risks, and corrective and preventive actions (CAPA) with closed-loop action items ensure issues are resolved.

Across all these areas, Aras solutions provide easy-to-use dashboards for executive visibility with real-time rollups and drill-down capabilities, as well as scorecards for measuring and reporting on performance.

Delivering Business Results

The Freudenberg Group’s North American subsidiary, Freudenberg-NOK, designs and produces several hundred

“Having the scalable, manageable, and secure Microsoft platform as a foundation is a tremendous competitive advantage for us.”

—Marc Lind
Vice President of Marketing
Aras Corporation

“Since we’ve implemented the Aras enterprise open-source software, our teams have achieved significantly better launch performance and lower scrap rates during production, resulting in higher profits.”

—Tom Gill
Director, Freudenberg Group

new components
each year for
automotive
original
equipment
manufacturer
(OEM) customers,
including General
Motors, Ford, and

Nissan. This process used to involve teams faxing numerous documents and sending them through e-mail, which quickly became disorganized and outdated. Using Aras Innovator, Freudenberg has deployed a new product development process that maps the APQP requirements to the company’s own competitive practices. Project related information is now consolidated in a single system and can be viewed over the Web from anywhere in the world.

Project leaders compile their plans and assign specific activities to team members, with associated tasks and deliverable due dates displayed in a checklist format within Aras Innovator. Red, yellow, and green traffic light indicators in the Aras dashboard display project status, and these risk alerts prompt managers about important

issues. Owners of these deliverables attach related documents to the project workspace as a way of updating progress to provide visibility for other team members and executives. Project activities are stored in the Microsoft SQL Server™ database, which company employees with appropriate security permissions can search. As part of its “Flawless Launch” initiative for continuous improvement, Freudenberg also has created a scorecard in Aras Innovator that measures new product introduction on 13 key performance indicators (KPIs) to gauge customer satisfaction and plant-launch performance across five dimensions: quality, readiness, timeliness, service, and profitability.

“By score carding our KPI metrics with Aras Innovator, we can quickly determine where we’re improving and isolate areas where we need to make adjustments to ensure customer satisfaction,” says Gill. “Since we’ve implemented the Aras enterprise open-source software, our teams have achieved significantly better launch performance and lower scrap rates during production, resulting in higher profits.”

Microsoft Platform Supports Integrated Business Processes

Aras Innovator requires minimal infrastructure to run—Microsoft Windows Server® 2003 with Microsoft .NET, and SQL Server 2005—and also provides flexible options to integrate with the 2007 Microsoft Office system and Microsoft server products such as Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007. Because Aras Innovator is certified as Microsoft .NET Connected and uses open standards-based XML and SOAP Web services technologies, integrating the software is simple. Data can be easily exchanged with existing enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), product data management (PDM), and other legacy business systems.

“Having the scalable, manageable, and secure Microsoft platform as a foundation is a tremendous competitive advantage for us,” says Marc Lind, vice president of marketing for Aras.

“Companies are already familiar with the Microsoft environment, so they don’t need to hire new people to work with the Aras solutions, and we make it very easy for them to customize our

software using a graphical, drag-and-drop solution studio.”

The Aras Innovator open-source project is hosted on CodePlex, the Microsoft online collaborative software development portal. CodePlex gives IT pros and developers from all over the world the ability to participate in the development of the Aras Innovator solutions, integration adaptors, and Microsoft Office-based clients.

Developing on Microsoft technologies has helped Aras grow its business in other important ways, adds Lind. “Our team is better able to innovate using the Web services and development capabilities of the .NET environment in Microsoft Visual Studio® 2005,” he says. “As a result, we deliver more innovative products in less time and at lower costs.”

- To download the Aras Microsoft enterprise open-source software solutions, go to <http://www.aras.com/>.
- To find out more about the Microsoft Emerging Business Team and the Microsoft Partner programs available for startups, visit the [Microsoft Startup Zone](#).

Copyright

Information in this document, including URL and other Internet Web site references, is subject to change without notice and is provided for informational purposes only. The entire risk of the use or results from the use of this document remains with the user, and Microsoft Corporation makes no warranties, either express or implied. Unless otherwise noted, the companies, organizations, products, domain names, e-mail addresses, logos, people, places, and events depicted in examples herein are fictitious. No association with any real company, organization, product, domain name, e-mail address, logo, person, place, or event is intended or should be inferred. Complying with all applicable copyright laws is the responsibility of the user. Without limiting the rights under copyright, no part of this document may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise), or for any purpose, without the express written permission of Microsoft Corporation.

© 2007 Microsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved.

Microsoft may have patents, patent applications, trademarks, copyrights, or other intellectual property rights covering subject matter in this document. Except as expressly provided in any written license agreement from Microsoft, the furnishing of this document does not give you any license to these patents, trademarks, copyrights, or other intellectual property.

Microsoft, SQL Server, Visual Studio, and Windows Server are either registered trademarks or trademarks of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

All other trademarks are property of their respective owners.