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**Goal:** Offer customers considerable expansion in product scope and capabilities without sacrificing reliability and performance.

**Why they embed DataDirect:**

DataDirect was the acknowledged industry leader for database connectivity.

**Business benefits:** Expanded product offering from a primarily read-only portal search engine to an elaborate platform for collaboration and application integration.

**Technical benefits:** The company's Java and .NET products are both now 100% managed code and have strategic direction and manageability.

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Jim Nash  
Lead Portal Engineer  
Plumtree Software  
[www.plumtree.com](http://www.plumtree.com)

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For more information, visit:  
[www.datadirect.com](http://www.datadirect.com)

When Plumtree Software began encountering problems with the Oracle database connectivity drivers they were using, they knew it was time to seek alternatives that would allow them to continue expanding the scope of Plumtree's offerings.

Plumtree provides enterprise solutions for businesses to create portals, communities, and composite applications in both Java and .NET. The company's 700–800 customers include vast organizations such as Mazda in the automotive sector, Proctor and Gamble, and the U.S. Navy. These customers rely on Plumtree's solutions to connect existing systems with people, bringing employees, customers, and partners — some 24 million users worldwide — more efficient collaboration within a business process.

Things weren't always so sophisticated. Plumtree Software began by offering primarily read-only portal content — much like a privatized version of Yahoo's web search engine — that allowed organizations to find information across the entire enterprise. While the original concept of a centralized portal remains, over time it came to embrace such technologies as communications and application sharing, bringing users unprecedented ability to collaborate within the organization, and serving as a generalized platform for integrating disparate applications.

As their products began expanding in complexity and scope, larger customers such as Proctor and Gamble began having problems; these were caused by the inadequacy of Oracle's database connectivity drivers to reliably handle the increasing performance demands of Plumtree's software. Worsening the situation was Oracle's support, which proved unequal to the challenge.

"Above all, we needed quality of support," says Jim Nash, who leads portal database development at Plumtree. Since turning to DataDirect as the leader in the industry for data connectivity, Nash says he appreciates the responsive support he gets. "Timeliness of support is critical for us," he says.

Having achieved success with a rapidly evolving product line using DataDirect Connect *for* ODBC and JDBC, when the time came for Plumtree to leverage the benefits of .NET for their customers, DataDirect Connect *for* .NET seemed the natural choice.

"The quality of DataDirect's products was a known factor, and so was the quality of support," says Nash. "The DataDirect ADO.NET provider supports an API closely resembling that of the JDBC API, facilitating the porting our Java code to .NET — a very wise decision on DataDirect's part."

DataDirect Connect *for* .NET's use of 100 percent managed code is also of considerable importance for providing the sort of security demanded in an application environment designed to provide access and collaboration to an untold number of different types of users. The .NET Framework enforces security restrictions on managed code that let an administrator define a security policy to grant or revoke permissions on an organization, a computer, an assembly, or a user level.

“We can now say that both our Java and our .NET products are 100 percent managed code and have strategic direction and manageability,” says Nash.

The company’s latest offerings signify the next stage in the evolution of Plumtree’s platform, from a portal for assembling and presenting information, to a foundation for creating process-driven applications to help solve complex, extended-enterprise business challenges. These include the Plumtree G6 suites such as the Application Suite, a Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) for developing and deploying composite collaborative applications with back-end integration.

“G6 will enhance businesses’ ability to create new applications, collaborate both inside and outside the organization, and deliver information in a unified format,” says Plumtree CEO John Kunze. “Collaboration G6 lets users interact directly with the project management system via e-mail, creating discussions, notifications, and project documents in the e-mail client. Bulk publishing functionality serves as a staging system for gathering materials that will be distributed to large audiences.”

That’s an impressive array of capabilities. And wherever database connectivity is called for in the mix, DataDirect’s products will be there to provide it.