

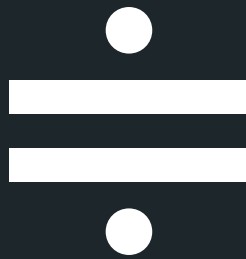
FLEXIBILITY AND FREEDOM



CASE STUDY ZIG



≡ Solvinity.
Secure Managed IT Services



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Flexibility and freedom

Software developer Zig was looking for more flexibility and freedom. Where the company previously provided custom solutions to individual customers, the need grew to produce scalable and affordable solutions based on a standard platform more quickly. Within four years, Zig transformed from a traditional project organisation into an innovative SaaS service provider. Together with Solvinity, Zig developed a cloud-centric strategy that has made the organisation many times more efficient, as a result of which Zig has created space for market expansion and innovation.

About Zig

Zig Websoftware develops online applications for housing corporations and commercial real estate organisations. Zig's digital solutions bring real estate providers and their clients together, from housing supply to residential services. More than 135 Dutch real estate organisations are already using more than 350 environments that have been developed by Zig. Zig was founded in 2001 and has over seventy employees at offices in Huizen, Amersfoort and Amsterdam.



“With Solvinity you have a very flexible party that is willing to invest time and energy in ambitious projects to bring them to a successful conclusion together”



Kobbe van Daatselaar,
CTO, Zig

Zig company information

- Independent software vendor
- 70+ employees
- 3 offices (Huizen/Amersfoort/Amsterdam)
- 135+ affiliated real estate organisations
- 350+ online environments
- 1 million+ users

The challenge

Zig originally focused on housing corporations, for which a separate infrastructure was set up for each client and customised solutions were built. In 2016, Zig decided to take a new, forward-looking path: it wanted to make the transition from a project to a product organisation by offering its products as a service from the cloud (SaaS: Software-as-a-Service).

This change offers both the customer and the software developer various important advantages, says Kobbe van Daatselaar, CTO at Zig: "It makes our products faster to deliver and more scalable, allowing us to much better adjust and configure new services and peak loads for both small and large customers". In addition, issues such as security and overcapacity are more manageable.

"What we wanted was a scalable and secure environment with 24x7 services."

Zig ultimately wants to transfer its services to the public cloud, in order to be able to make use of the ever-increasing range of standard tools, which are being developed there at a rapid pace. But in order to do this, Zig's services first had to be standardised. That's why Zig was looking for a suitable and reliable partner to develop its own platform in a private cloud environment. "What we wanted was a scalable and safe environment with 24/7 services, where continuity and availability are also guaranteed at night", says Van Daatselaar. "I simply don't have a team of my own that can handle that administration 24/7."

Furthermore, the partner had to be able to make the switch to SaaS in close cooperation with Zig. "The danger is that you're splitting up Development and Operations, while you actually want these two working closely together for these kind of processes. How can you get two organisations with separate responsibilities to still operate in an agile way?" Based on previous experiences with Solvinity, and after close consultation between both teams, Zig and Solvinity decided to take on this challenge together.

Objectives

- From project to product organisation
- Standardisation on a single proprietary cloud-based SaaS platform
- Greater flexibility, scalability and control
- Faster time-to-market
- More room for market expansion and innovation

The results

Over the past four years, Zig has been able to roll out exactly the strategy it had in mind with Solvinity. A proprietary platform called Hexia was set up and all existing services and customers were transferred to the new platform using CI/CD and container technology. "In fact, we were able to change our entire business model," says Van Daatselaar. "All that's actually left of the old project organisation is consultancy. The rest consists of development teams building new releases."

The switch has also made Zig much more independent. Zig now has people in-house who can take care of an important part of the operations. "We can, for example, set up a CI/CD-street ourselves - we only need to activate Solvinity if an underlying system is involved".

"In fact, we were able to change our entire business model."

The current Hexia platform is a turn-key solution that can be adapted very quickly for any customer. "Four years ago Zig had to request separate quotations for each new customer from their hosting party," says Van Daatselaar. "The quotations had to be sent to the customer for approval, then the hosting party had to install hardware, and only then could we install our software. The whole process could take six to eight weeks. Now it's fully automated and a customer can be online in within a minute!"

The transition from customisation to launching releases for all customers has given Zig much more control over its own development capacity. Van Daatselaar: "We have, of course, been busy for some time transferring our customers to our new platform, but we are currently in the phase of requesting

specific wishes in customer panels. This enables Zig to develop targeted functionality that is used to maximum effect. "Now is the time for innovation and market expansion towards commercial real estate.

Zig wants to be the market standard in this new segment within two years. "We are now competing mainly with internal teams and self-built solutions. Our current SaaS solutions are much more attractive to virtually all customers because we offer an efficient and user-friendly environment that has been proven in practice and is constantly being developed based on direct feedback from the community".

Results

- Hexia: one stable and secure platform for all services
- Complete SaaS
- Time-to-market and scaling from weeks to minutes
- 25% increase in turnover due to cost savings, higher efficiency and market expansion
- Market expansion to commercial real estate

A 'Stretched' DevOps collaboration

With a view to the future, container technology has been introduced in conjunction with Solvinity, making it easy for the new SaaS platform to go to the public cloud in due course. This also makes Hexia flexible and scalable. Both the supply and the residential services platform run on Hexia; the difference is in the containers used.

From the very first discussions, Zig and Solvinity carefully considered the best way for the two organisations to work together smoothly, despite the clear separation of responsibilities. Zig wanted to make its own organisation more flexible by saying goodbye to project-based customisation for customers, but was looking for the same flexibility from the hosting partner. "Solvinity understands very well what we do," says Van Daatselaar. "We know about our software, but less about iron, security and setting up a good network infrastructure. Solvinity really is the architect of how that separation is arranged in a responsible way. Because we started working according to the DevOps approach, we had to learn everything in between together."

Zig wanted short lines of communication, in which its own engineers could work directly with the people at Solvinity, without having to submit support tickets or call in project managers. To this end, Zig and Solvinity have developed a method that Solvinity has now developed as '**Stretched DevOps**': one scrum team in which people from Zig and Solvinity participate together. "This close cooperation was very much appreciated by our engineers and also proved to be extremely instructive for our organisation!"

Van Daatselaar is particularly pleased with the flexibility of Solvinity. "We're a software company, and hosting is a given. That's why many software companies still work with their hosting party in a traditional way, like we did four years ago: if you need a certain service, you get a quote and each service is approached as a separate project. This cooperation proves that things can be done differently." At Zig, Solvinity already had an image of being thorough and reliable: "A lot of customers within the government, so once it's in place, it looks good too" According to Van Daatselaar, Solvinity has the flexibility and willingness to put energy and time into the collaboration, and the capacity to jointly develop new and innovative solutions.

The solution

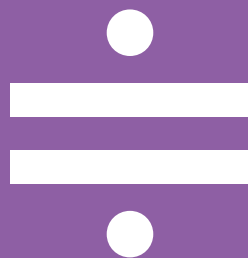
- Introduction of CI/CD and container technology
- Ontwikkeling 'Stretched' DevOps
- Private cloud hosting with a view to the public cloud
- Security Services: IDS/IPS, Backup & Restore, VPN, Continuous Hardening

About Solvinity

Solvinity provides Secure Managed IT Services in the public, private and hybrid cloud for organisations with high security requirements. Solvinity's services include innovative cloud solutions, outsourcing, managed hosting and workplace solutions, such as Lango Workspace. For organisations that develop their own software, Solvinity offers solutions such as Integrated Delivery and 'Stretched' DevOps. The organisation has distinguished itself with very high standards for cybersecurity and certifications according to national and international standards such as ISO 27001, ISO 14001, ISO 9001, SOC 1, SOC 2 and NEN 7510. Solvinity provides services to, among others, the government, including the Ministry of Justice and Security, municipalities and leading organisations in financial and business services, such as Trans Link Systems (public transport chip card), TNO, ING Bank, Ahold and ONVZ. Solvinity has over 250 employees spread over four offices in Amsterdam, Assen, Amersfoort and Den Bosch. In 2019, the company achieved an annual turnover of 47.8 million euros. For more information, please visit www.solvinity.com, or follow Solvinity on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Meer weten over Solvinity?

Neem contact met ons op! Bel **+31 (0)20 36 43 600**
of mail ons op info@solvinity.com



 **Solvinity**[®]
Secure Managed IT Services

Solvinity B.V.
Postbus 23673
1100 ED Amsterdam

T +31(0)20 364 3600
E info@solvinity.com
solvinity.com