

## Montreal's 8D delivers developers' dream

By James Lewis

February 4, 2002

A Montreal-based software firm has created a Java-based development tool that its CEO says is proven to cut application development time by more than four-fifths and save companies millions of dollars.

"When you create an application, you see that there's a pretty big layer that's always the same - it's about 60 to 80 per cent of the job," says Isabelle Bettez, CEO and president of **8D** Technologies Inc.

**8D's** Cloud9 "smart operating environment" aims to alleviate the costs associated with developing applications by making a bedrock layer out of that 60 to 80 per cent, giving companies the time and money to tinker with the remaining 40 to 20 per cent to meet their needs.

Bettez says Cloud9 should especially benefit large I.T.-intensive organizations that do a lot of custom development in-house. "Often we see corporations spending lots of time and money trying to solve problems that they know nothing about, because it's not their core business," she says, adding that by the time they've finally finished an application project, they're usually over budget and behind schedule.

"This environment allows you to jump-start the application development," she says. "One part is already done, and you just have to do the rest of it."

Although Cloud9 has only been commercially available for a month, Bettez says it's already been proven through its use in **8D's** custom development efforts for its clients. She points to a deal with Microcell to create a sponsored telephony app, where mobile phone customers got additional air time minutes for consenting to download text ads to their handsets.

During the proposal phase, Bettez says, "our competition said, 'O.K., it's going to take three years, at a million dollars per year.' We said, 'Within three months you're going to have a functional prototype, and within six months we're going to deploy it on your network for your users.'"

Although Microcell was puzzled by the discrepancy between the two proposals, it awarded the job to **8D**, and Bettez says her company had a prototype version up and running within the specified timeframe.

"Within six months, we had the application up and running and working quite well."

Bettez says that even companies who have no need for custom coding can use Cloud9, if only for its ability to knit disparate operating environments together. She says the company married a voice-recognition system and an e-commerce portal for 3Com, and it's drawn interest from Sun Microsystems because of its cross-platform capability and the fact it's Java-based. "They love it because we're pushing their technology."

Cloud9's versatility can be somewhat of a setback if it's not approached correctly, Bettez says. "The platform is quite generic, and it can solve a lot of problems for a lot of people, but that's not a good way to sell it, because the perception is that it doesn't do anything for anybody."

As a result, **8D** has focused its attention on the wireless, automotive, gaming, and enterprise application markets. Since the company has experience with wireless but little in other segments, it's looking to the reseller community to lend a hand.

"The channel is key for succeeding, because we think Cloud 9 has the potential to become the standard in its market segment," Bettez says, "but we know we're not going to do it by ourselves." CBIZ