In 2015 Slalom, a quickly growing consulting firm, embarked on an ambitious transformation initiative to move many of its key business operations into the cloud. Once complete, the project will modernize the company’s core applications for sales, human resources, finance, billing, professional services and other key business operations.

The Seattle-headquartered company recognized that to achieve its ambitious goal, it needed a strategic approach for integrating its applications and data — especially to keep pace with its high-speed growth.

In essence, Slalom required both agility and speed. And lots of it. To meet these demands, Slalom turned to Boomi.

Playing Catch Up With Integration

Founded in 2001, Slalom is a purpose-driven consulting firm that helps companies solve business problems and build for the future. It runs 23 offices in the United States, as well as locations in London and Toronto. Its workforce has grown more than 13-fold in just a decade, and in 2017 Slalom crossed $1 billion in revenue while supporting more than 1,000 clients.

“With all the phenomenal growth, you’ve got a lot more systems that have to come online and a lot of things happening at a furious pace,” says Michael “Ski” Cierkowski, Slalom’s director of architecture and emerging technologies. “Our previous integration tools weren’t sufficient.”
Over the years Slalom had assembled a piecemeal collection of custom scripts, console apps, and disparate integration tools. This fragmented environment meant lots of inefficient manual coding, poor visibility and a lack of repeatable processes.

“It was a hodgepodge of various technologies that couldn’t scale with the new systems we wanted to deploy,” Cierkowski says. “We really needed to standardize on one integration platform.”

Slalom undertook a search for a modern, pure cloud approach to integration that could keep pace with its hyper growth, bring new agility to how it connected applications, and deliver essential data to its workforce. All roads led to Boomi.

As a top Boomi partner, Slalom’s consultants have extensive experience guiding integration and digital transformation projects for A-list clients. Cierkowski says they all enthusiastically recommended Boomi as the best fit for the project.

Also, Slalom was already using Boomi’s integration platform as a service (iPaaS) to connect its financial planning and ERP system.

In their due diligence Cierkowski and his team also evaluated other popular integration platforms but found them costly and complicated, lacking the low-code, rapid integration offered by Boomi.

“We felt that Boomi really hit the sweet spot by providing an intuitive graphical user interface to design our integration flows,” Cierkowski says. “We could quickly deploy our integrations to wherever we wanted...on-premise or in the cloud. It didn’t matter. Boomi easily handles all of that.”

A New Approach to Integration

To start its enterprise transformation, Slalom connected its new Salesforce CRM with the company’s professional services automation (PSA) system that serves as a project management system of record across Slalom’s thousands of consultants. With these two systems seamlessly integrated, Boomi helps Slalom better manage consultant assignments by connecting opportunities in the sales pipeline with projects in the PSA system.

Matching the right consultants with the right projects is mission-critical for Slalom amid a high volume of thousands of ever-changing projects. Essential to a service business, Slalom need to be adroit at linking consultants to projects across a variety of factors including skills, availability and location preference. To improve that process, Cierkowski’s team is rolling out a new custom-built app called Matchmaker, using Boomi to fetch data from an employee profile portal and several other systems.

“That’s where Boomi really shines. It is so good at bringing in information from multiple systems and making it easier for our managers to match the right consultant to the right project,” Cierkowski says.

Slalom is also using Boomi to connect its PSA system to a Workday HR system. And for improving sales forecasting and financial reporting, Slalom is integrating Salesforce with a data warehouse based on Microsoft SQL Server.

Another Boomi-driven integration connects the PSA system with a ServiceNow IT service management system to support consultant security controls.

In total Slalom has deployed Boomi for eight integrations, with more in the pipeline.
Since standardizing on Boomi, Cierkowski says his developers can complete integration tasks far more quickly with much less effort than hacking their way through Slalom’s previous tangle of techniques and tools.

For example, it took Slalom just 1.5 weeks to build a Boomi integration between Slalom’s PSA system and Microsoft Active Directory. Several years earlier, that same integration took two months to build using another tool.

“I was impressed at how our developer was able to get that synchronization in play with very minimal work,” says Cierkowski, who heads a team of four developers. “Our lead Boomi developer absolutely loves the tool. It’s very easy for him to create a data flow, map things together, do some quick transformations and get the data flow pushed out in a matter of hours.”

Right Data, Right Place, Right Time

Whatever the scenario, Slalom has found Boomi to be a fast, flexible and easy-to-use platform that’s helping the digital consultancy build its own agile and connected business.

Cierkowski says Boomi is a critical component in Slalom’s enterprise transformation. Integration is foundational to helping Slalom improve data timeliness, accuracy and availability.

“The business value of Boomi is in delivering the right data to the right place at the right time,” Cierkowski says. “And we’ve been able to ensure that data is more timely in our systems. Before Boomi we could only move data once a night. With Boomi we can automatically update our data once an hour or every 15 minutes, with zero hassles.”

From the IT perspective, Cierkowski says Slalom no longer has to debate which integration approach to take when a new project arises. Boomi is always the answer.

And with Boomi Slalom developers don’t need to relearn random or ad hoc integration methods from older projects, a common issue in the past. Cierkowski says removing that burden has boosted developer morale, eliminating the frustrations and fire drills of juggling various integration technologies.
“The biggest time savings is standardizing on a single platform,” Cierkowski says. “Boomi makes integrations much easier. If we had to do the integrations for our enterprise transformation using other technologies, it would be a lot more complicated.”

Slalom is also realizing benefits with Boomi’s centralized management console, which provides a “single pane of glass” visibility into the health and activity of all integration processes, as well as alerts to changes.

“With Boomi all of our integrations are in one spot,” Cierkowski says. “We have transparency into processes and can much more easily track what’s going on. Before, we might not know we had a problem until it showed up in the actual data. Now that we’re on Boomi, we can see and fix an issue before it becomes a problem.”

As Slalom’s integration practice grows, it’s looking to Boomi Master Data Hub to create “golden records” of customers and employees across applications. That’s increasingly important as Slalom continues to grow its workforce and expand into new markets.

Whatever the business need, Slalom’s strategic approach to integration is paying off. With the Boomi platform in place, its application environment is ready for another decade of growth.

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Michael “Ski” Cierkowski
Director of Architecture and Emerging Technologies, Slalom

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