

How Podium transformed from a publisher to a technology powerhouse

From Publishing Leader to Tech Innovator

Podium is the fastest-growing digital publisher in North America and proudly joined the Inc. 5000 fastest-growing companies list in 2023. With a focus on genre fiction, the Los Angeles-based publisher has become a leader in science fiction, fantasy, and romance and has been a pioneer in bringing popular subgenres like GameLit, LitRPG, and progression fantasy to the forefront.

The publisher leverages proprietary technology to discover, develop, and amplify the work of groundbreaking storytellers. When it also wanted to rely on technology to identify book titles that would excel as audiobooks, the leadership team reached out to Ripple Group to help build an machine learning-based predictive software solution to be the foundation of their intellectual property (IP) technology.



Podium trusted Ripple Group to assist in building an predictive software solution that would serve as the foundation of their intellectual property technology.

Podium Turns to Ripple Group

Entering the project on the ground floor, the Ripple Group team began the process of understanding Podium's business and technology goals. Once armed with a keen sense of what Podium sought to accomplish, the team conducted executive oversight and assigned a team member to serve as Podium's product manager with the intention of further defining the project.

As work on the new technology progressed, Podium's leadership wanted additional help from Ripple Group. Soon, the scope of work expanded to the development of a narrator database that helps Podium match narrators with book titles.

Later, when Podium was investigating the acquisition of Bookstat, the publisher brought in Ripple Group to help with conducting due diligence. That's when Ripple Group invited Particle41 to the project.

The Particle41 team's role in the due diligence process was to review Bookstat's code. The team discovered that the code was written by one person and designed to perform very specific functions in a very specific way. This meant that multiple coders couldn't work on the code simultaneously, and it was impossible to scale the code to accommodate the new demands that would be placed upon it.



The Ripple Group team has been invaluable. They've helped us achieve our goals, visualize what success means, and translate everything into a development plan.



Jon Oxidine

Chief Operating Officer and
Chief Financial Officer

Podium

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Particle41's Role Expands

At this point, Podium had several technology projects in the works in addition to the pending Bookstat acquisition. With everything running in parallel, Podium's leadership realized that they were well positioned to move closer to its overall objectives. The only problem was the publisher needed an effective and efficient technology team; Podium had outgrown the existing project-based software development vendor.

"We were clearly not the vendor's top priority, and that made technology development very inefficient," said Jon Oxidine, Podium's chief operating officer and chief financial officer. "We weren't getting where we wanted to go as fast as we wanted to get there."

Moreover, according to Jon, the software development vendor lacked the creativity necessary to advance the content-sourcing project. "To the vendor, everything was a challenge instead of an opportunity," he said.

Jon knew that Ripple Group was already doing an outstanding job in its role as a strategic thinker and management services provider. What he needed was a software development team who'd see only opportunities when faced with challenges. That team turned out to be Particle41.

The Particle41 team stepped in and took over the work of the previous software development vendor. They performed several critical technology-related functions, of which several received patents. Their work also included application development, data engineering, and platform engineering. They took care of the underlying technical muscle, while Ripple Group handled the brains to ensure the correct strategy and tactics were in place.

More specifically, Particle41 achieved the following for Podium:

- Consolidated a diverse technical stack resulting from the combination of Podium's core stack and the stack of the acquired company, Bookstat
- Established stability through DevOps methodology and cloud best practices
- Provided data engineering services that expanded the value and maturity of Podium's data
- Expanded a creative robotics process automation approach to data gathering

"It's clear to me that the Particle41 team are good at what they do," said Jon. "They've been able to accomplish things quicker than we anticipated. They're able to take problems that we have and make suggestions that turn those problems into opportunities and solutions. They're also creative problem solvers who are truly invested members of the overall team."



The Particle41 team allows us to achieve more by being **true partners in our development process**. They think creatively along with our management team to help move our business forward and deliver results in an efficient manner.



Jon Oxidine

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RESULTS

Podium saw the following results thanks to  PARTICLE41 + **RIPPLE**
GROUP:



ENHANCED TECHNOLOGICAL CAPABILITY

“With the help of Ripple Group and Particle41, we have more technological capabilities to deliver on what we envision for our business,” said Jon. “We also have a lot more confidence in those capabilities as we move forward.”



IMPROVED COHESIVE SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

“Thanks to the work of Particle41, the software development we are doing now is more cohesive,” said Jon. “The work tells a better story, and one software project is building upon another instead of developing projects piecemeal.”



ACCELERATED SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT VELOCITY

“Now that we have a dedicated development team, we are able to develop software projects with a much greater velocity,” said Jon.



ACHIEVED BUSINESS OBJECTIVES

Podium went from an idea of developing intellectual property to filing patents and acquiring a business, all with Ripple Group’s management support and Particle41’s development work.