

High-Performance E-commerce PaaS Provider · Commerce / Agency - Managed PaaS for E-commerce · Berlin, Germany · Ongoing

High-Performance E-commerce PaaS Provider: Concept to prototype in weeks. 7 POCs delivered over five years. PM satisfaction went from 4 to 10.

10

product builds

7

POCs delivered across a 5-year embedded partnership

CLIENT CONTEXT

The client is a Berlin-based managed Platform-as-a-Service (PaaS) provider specializing in high-performance e-commerce hosting for the German mid-market. Founded in the mid-2010s and led by a veteran management team, the company manages over 200 live e-commerce projects across prominent open-source ecosystems.

Their infrastructure stack includes auto-scaling, DDoS protection, CI/CD pipelines, real-time PHP profiling, and 24/7 monitoring. All services are built on certified German data center infrastructure to ensure the highest standards of performance and data sovereignty.

As a certified community partner within the e-commerce sector, the company serves a diverse portfolio of 130-200+ online retailers.

THE CHALLENGE

The company's core value proposition, which centers on reliable and high-performance hosting, demands constant platform attention. Their internal engineering team was fully committed to keeping production infrastructure stable and compliant for over 200 client shops. That left almost no capacity to explore and validate new product ideas that had begun surfacing from client needs and market gaps.

The challenge was not a lack of ideas but execution bandwidth. The provider had a growing queue of concepts, including a video optimization tool, a performance scoring engine, an image server, and a Functions-as-a-Service layer, that could each become differentiated offerings. However, standing up a dedicated prototype team internally was neither fast nor cost-effective given the company's lean structure.

What they needed was not just additional developers. They required a team that could receive a rough concept, make independent architecture decisions, build fast, and validate the idea with minimal oversight while the core team stayed focused on production reliability. Any partner that required heavy briefing, constant check-ins, or close QA supervision would create more overhead than they solved.

The stakes were real. In the competitive regional e-commerce hosting market, new merchant tooling and differentiated services are a key part of retaining and growing the client base. Velocity on product ideas mattered commercially.

THE APPROACH

Gradion embedded a product team inside the company's workflow, functioning not as a development subcontractor but as an autonomous product unit. The engagement was structured around ownership, where Gradion developers and PMs treated each project as their own, from architecture selection to final delivery.

Several operating principles defined how the partnership ran:

Agile sprint cadence with stakeholder feedback loops: Sprint planning was rigorous, with regular checkpoints against client stakeholders to maintain prioritization clarity. This kept prototypes on track without requiring day-to-day management from the company's core team.

Lean approaches to side projects: Gradion brought internal process efficiency designed for flexible, lower-scope builds. The team adapted working practices to each project type rather than applying uniform enterprise delivery overhead.

Shared ownership culture: Peer code reviews, collective accountability, and daily syncs meant Gradion developers proactively challenged ideas and contributed to co-planning, functioning culturally as an integrated part of the client's organization rather than a remote vendor.

Shared talent pool: The partnership created a bilateral capability. Gradion could draw on the client's domain expertise in regional e-commerce hosting, while the company could access Gradion's broader technical depth for specialized requirements.

RESULTS

7

POCs delivered as structured side projects

10

collaboration projects shipped

Over five years, the partnership delivered a consistent record of concept-to-prototype execution:

7 Proof of Concepts (POCs) delivered as structured side projects: This included a Video Optimizer tool that moved from prototype to market validation with selected customers.

10 collaboration projects shipped: These included a performance scoring engine, a custom client portal, an image processing server, a specialized proxy solution, log exploration tools, a Functions-as-a-Service (FaaS) layer, and other strategic internal tools.

PM satisfaction rating improved from 4 to 10: Client project management ratings increased from an initial 4 out of 10 to a perfect score over the course of the engagement.

Zero core team disruption: Production operations for over 200 client shops remained unaffected throughout the entire innovation process.

Long-term embedded partnership: The client treats Gradion as a trusted extension of their own team rather than a transactional vendor.

The model proved that a lean hosting specialist could run a productive innovation pipeline alongside operations without hiring, without distraction, and without quality loss.

SERVICES DELIVERED

- Agile team augmentation
- Product development (concept to prototype)

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TECHNOLOGY STACK

- PHP-based e-commerce platforms (Shopware, Magento)
- CI/CD pipelines

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- ▬ Workflow optimization
 - Technical consulting
 - Shared talent pool development
 - ▬ Containerized / PaaS architecture
 - Agile / Lean Startup methodology
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Ready to discuss a similar challenge?

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