



Camino Ninja · Travel / Outdoor / Consumer Mobile App · Europe / Global (Camino de Santiago pilgrimage routes) · Ongoing

Camino Ninja's app ran on hardcoded JSON files and a legacy PHP admin portal. Gradion replaced the entire stack - backend, mobile, and CMS - and delivered a +40% revenue uplift.

CLIENT CONTEXT

Camino Ninja is a mobile travel app serving pilgrims walking the Camino de Santiago routes across Europe. The app provides route guidance, offline maps, hotel information, and travel logistics for one of the world's most popular long-distance pilgrimage trails. The user base is international, and the product's value depends on reliable offline functionality - connectivity on remote sections of the Camino cannot be assumed.

THE CHALLENGE

By the time Gradion engaged, the Camino Ninja platform had accumulated significant technical debt across every layer. Data management relied on hardcoded JSON files, which meant that any content update - a new hotel listing, a route correction, a content change - required direct developer intervention. This bottleneck made the content team dependent on engineering resources for routine operational work.

The admin portal was built on PHP with minimal functionality, offering little flexibility for managing routes, images, reviews, or partner content. The underlying architecture had no meaningful separation between the data layer, business logic, and frontend delivery.

The mobile app itself needed to be rebuilt. Performance had degraded, cross-platform consistency was inconsistent, and the codebase was not structured to support the feature roadmap the product needed. Critically, any rewrite had to preserve the app's offline map and hotel data sync capabilities - functionality that users relied on in areas without reliable mobile connectivity.

The challenge was not incremental improvement. The entire stack required replacement, with no acceptable regression in the features users depended on.

THE APPROACH

Gradion addressed the backend, mobile app, and content management layer in parallel.

On the backend, all hardcoded JSON data was migrated into a PostgreSQL database with automated backups, replication, and integrity checks. The backend was deployed on AWS using RDS for managed database operations, API Gateway for request handling, and ElastiCache for caching. Cloud-native CI/CD pipelines, load balancing, and monitoring were implemented as part of the infrastructure rebuild.

The mobile app was rewritten in Flutter. This choice delivered better performance, consistent behavior across iOS and Android, and a codebase structured for long-term maintainability. The rewrite preserved and enhanced the offline map and hotel data sync functionality that existing users relied on - this was a hard requirement, not a best-effort goal.

For content management, Gradion implemented Directus.io as the central CMS, with custom admin extensions built to match the operational requirements of the Camino Ninja team. Role-based access controls were configured, and hotel-owner interfaces were built to allow partners to manage their own listings. Dynamic management of routes, content, images, and reviews became fully operational without requiring developer involvement.

RESULTS

+40% revenue uplift - delivered post-modernization

Hardcoded JSON eliminated - all content now managed through PostgreSQL-backed CMS

Zero developer dependency for content updates - content teams operate independently

Offline maps and hotel data sync preserved - no regression through Flutter rewrite

AWS cloud infrastructure live - RDS, API Gateway, ElastiCache, CI/CD pipelines, load balancing, monitoring

Hotel-owner interfaces operational - partners manage their own listings directly

"When I started working with Gradion, my app was technically stuck. At first, I was afraid of the approach suggested by Gradion, which was to completely rewrite all of the front-end and back-end code. But after launch, the app's KPI improved by 40%, and the results quickly paid off. With this new foundation, we were able to quickly implement additional features that further increased growth. Gradion was an investment that paid for itself many times over after just one year."

Peter Eich

Founder and Serial Entrepreneur, Camino Ninja

SERVICES DELIVERED

- Mobile app development (Flutter)
- Cloud infrastructure engineering (AWS)
- Backend and database migration
- CMS implementation and customization
- CI/CD pipeline setup
- Platform modernization

TECHNOLOGY STACK

- Flutter (iOS and Android)
- PostgreSQL (AWS RDS)
- AWS (RDS, API Gateway, ElastiCache)
- Directus.io CMS with custom extensions
- Cloud-native CI/CD pipelines
- Load balancing and monitoring

Ready to discuss a similar challenge?

Gradion works with software companies, fintechs, and industrial operators across DACH, Southeast Asia, and Africa. ISO 27001 certified. 23 years of delivery in regulated and high-growth environments.

sales@gradion.com