"Gearset has enhanced our release process very quickly and helps us integrate with the Agile process. We've been able to build a better relationship with our end users, which is a big win."

Alex Jones, Project Manager, Xaxis

Global advertising platform Xaxis had been looking for a mature release management solution for their Salesforce environments. Keen to implement an Agile development process, and improve collaboration in their Salesforce team, they switched to Gearset and quickly saw benefits.

"Refreshing sandboxes with Eclipse and a manual diff would take me days. With Gearset, what would take me a day and a half, took me an hour or two. I was so happy."

JULIE ZARETSKY
Lead Software Engineer, Xaxis

Summary

Xaxis, a global advertising platform with deep Salesforce experience, had tried a range of Salesforce deployment tools with limited success. Change Sets and Ant proved powerful but cumbersome, and didn't scale with their team. A multipurpose CI solution provided automation, but struggled to cope with the nuances of Salesforce deployments. By switching to Gearset, Xaxis has cut deployment time from days to hours, enabled an Agile release methodology, and enhanced the relationship between their Salesforce team and their end users.

Background

Xaxis is a leading global programmatic advertising platform who uses data and technology to help advertisers reach and engage with audiences at scale. With offices around the world, their Salesforce release team have the responsibility of maintaining a global Salesforce presence for their large user base.

Xaxis has used Salesforce right from their inception, powering their CRM and Sales management since 2011. Their experienced team of admins and developers are responsible for development and releases across their environments. Having previously used several release tools, they were well-aware of the challenges of Salesforce deployments, and wanted a tool to support their Agile methodology.

We caught up with Julie Zaretsky, Lead Software Engineer at Xaxis, and Alex Jones, Project Manager at Xaxis, to find out what challenges they were facing with their deployments, and how Gearset was helping.

The problem

All development and management of the Xaxis Salesforce platform is carried out in-house by their expert Salesforce team. Changes are made in individual developer orgs before being merged into a partial sandbox for integration testing. From here, a release pipeline promotes changes up through a QA environment, UAT, and finally on to production.

Initially, Julie and her team used a mixture of Change Sets, Eclipse and Ant to manage their releases. This gave them the power to manually build their deployments to exact specifications.

As the team grew, they started running into issues. Overwriting colleague's changes was too easy, and work was often lost during deployments, as Julie explained.

> *"As we added more developers, we found we were accidentally overwriting each others' changes during development. Common classes that were touched by multiple team members were a big challenge."*

With complex changes, manually building packages became increasingly time-consuming, and development work started to get backed up waiting for a deployment window. Eventually, this became untenable.

> *"Keeping the sandboxes in sync became problematic. Tight deadlines forced us to put it off until it became unworkable. Then we'd have to stop for a couple of days and fix things."*

In an effort to streamline their releases, Xaxis set up a continuous integration service powered by a leading multipurpose solution. While this was complex to setup and maintain, it initially proved effective at promoting changes between their orgs.

Julie and her team soon discovered these tools, designed for use across multiple platforms, struggled to cope with the nuances of Salesforce deployments. One such area was overwriting metadata changes made in their production environment by end users - a situation unique to Salesforce.

Beyond being a frustration to the release team, the limitations of the tools began to have an impact on their relationship with the end users they were supporting. Julie elaborated on what was going wrong.

> *"Administrators and end users would make changes directly in production, such as List Views and Reports. Our CI solution used the Metadata API and would always deploy everything, not just the changes. Every time we deployed to production we would kill people's List Views. We couldn't find a way to automate deploying minor changes back down into git and our sandboxes, and the change would get wiped out every time they deployed. That killed our attempt at continuous integration."*

Alex started looking for a better way to manage their releases.

> *"I was extremely frustrated. I figured there had to be something better out there, and I found Gearset."*

How Gearset is helping

Gearset has rapidly cemented itself as the go-to release solution for the Xaxis Salesforce team, helping them implement an Agile release process, avoid code conflict, and drastically reduce the time to build and deploy changes.

For Julie, it has removed the manual steps of building deployment packages with Eclipse and Ant, with impressive results.

> *"Refreshing sandboxes, such as our QA environment, with Eclipse and a manual diff would take me days. With Gearset, I only had to make a few minor tweaks and it was done. What would take me a day and a half, took me an hour or two. I was so happy."*

The ability to clone an inbound deployment package and rapidly promote it through the org pipeline has streamlined their release process.

> *"I love that you can clone a deployment - going from Dev to QA, QA to Staging, and beyond."*

Julie was also impressed with how quickly she could get value out of Gearset. With a free trial, nothing to install on orgs, and an intuitive interface, she could get going in minutes.

> *"I very much like the interface, the usability. It's beautiful. I haven't really needed any support."*

By enabling the team to rapidly deploy their changes, Gearset has helped the Xaxis team strengthen their relationship with their end users, as Alex explained.

> *"Gearset has enhanced what we do very quickly. It's very intuitive to use. Gearset fills in a lot of the need we have from the business users' standpoint to speed up the release process. It helps us integrate with the Agile process. Previously, we had issues holding on to development work too long which made deployments even more complicated. Now, we've been able to build a better relationship with our end users, which is a big win."*

Alex has also been impressed with the customer support provided by the Gearset team.

> *"It's been really great working with Gearset. It was one of the reasons we decided to move across - Gearset always gives straight answers on the phone and they've been very responsive to our feedback and priorities."*

Would Xaxis recommend Gearset?

Alex has no reservations about recommending Gearset.

> *"Yes, absolutely. Gearset enhances beyond my normal expectations for a deployment solution. No matter how you operate, if you use Salesforce, Gearset immediately simplifies and expedites how you deploy."*

Find out how your business could save time and money by switching to Gearset. Visit www.gearset.com for more information and to start your free 30-day trial, or email team@gearset.com to arrange a demo.