

# Case Study

## Hortonworks



**MISSION:** Manage the World's data by powering the Future of Data.

**INDUSTRY:** Computer Software

**TYPE:** Public

**HEADQUARTERS:** Santa Clara, CA

**FOUNDED:** 2011

**COMPANY SIZE:** 1,001-5,000

**NASDAQ:** HDP

**COMMUNITY:** [community.hortonworks.com](http://community.hortonworks.com)

**SITE:** [hortonworks.com](http://hortonworks.com)

### COMPANY OVERVIEW

Hortonworks is a leading innovator at creating, distributing and supporting enterprise-ready open data platforms. Their mission is to manage the world's data. They have a single-minded focus on driving innovation in open source communities such as Apache Hadoop, NiFi, and Spark. Hortonworks' open Connected Data Platforms

power Modern Data Applications that deliver actionable intelligence from all data: data-in-motion and data-at-rest. Along with their 1600+ partners, Hortonworks provides the expertise, training and services that allow their customers to unlock the transformational value of data across any line of business.

### CLIENT SITUATION

Hortonworks was using disjointed Wordpress-based forums for Q&A, but lacked community engagement. They hoped to build an online, vibrant community and knowledge base where anyone could ask questions, access answers, and contribute ideas. According to Mark Herring, Vice President, Community Engagement and Evangelism at Hortonworks, "We wanted to engage at a technical level with a broad community and grow affinity for Hortonworks related technology." Herring continued, "We required a solution that was robust enough to handle large volumes of users, and also extensible to handle questions and answers, knowledge base articles and code repositories."

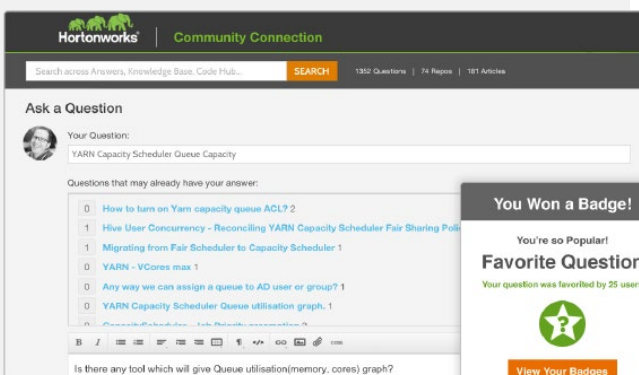
### DESIRED SOLUTION

Hortonworks began the search for a solution that provided:

- Gamification: Reward based content creation and participation.
- Proven robust architecture with the ability to scale to hundreds of thousands of page view and tens of thousands of users.
- Strong question and answer based metaphor, similar to Stack Overflow, but extensible to handle other rich content types like code repositories and knowledge based articles.
- Ability to customize the solution to provide the Hortonworks look and feel.
- Permissions based access to allow for internal and external collaboration
- Inspiration for internal users to share knowledge in the community instead of email.

Herring explained that the Hortonworks technical team began evaluating solutions, including Stack Overflow, Lithium, Jive and AnswerHub. "The problem with Stack Overflow is the community would never be *ours*, it would be *theirs*. We wanted to build up affinity for *our community*."

Hortonworks' approach for selecting a solution was less of an academic exercise. Initially, they looked at other technical communities in action, such as Splunk and MuleSoft. Without revealing the underlying technology, everyone voted on the site they wanted the Hortonworks community to emulate. Once a decision was made, the next step was to fully evaluate the software and features. Ultimately, AnswerHub was determined as best suited to launch, manage and build the Hortonworks community.



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## IMPLEMENTATION

With the decision to proceed with AnswerHub, Hortonworks began to enforce a knowledge sharing strategy. “The success of a community starts at the top. Prior to launch, management made a push for conversations to happen externally.” Herring continued, “Email communications were shut down between system engineers and they were redirected to the community.”

During implementation, Hortonworks worked very closely with DZone Software to create the look and experience of the community. While making underlying design changes, Hortonworks was able to use the AnswerHub platform. This was a top requirement; it was key that internal users could begin to capture and access important content on the site, even if the community’s visual elements were not yet finished for public launch.

The Hortonworks Community Connection (HCC) launched in December 2015 and has proved to be a success. In addition to the positive shock due to already pre-populated content in the community, users refer to the site regularly to find answers to technical questions and share their own knowledge and expertise.

Hortonworks continues to be very passionate about community and the team remains dedicated to its success. “Our philosophy is on the power of open. Hortonworks looks at our community differently than other companies – it’s not a toy or a game.” Herring continued, “Community is intrinsic to our DNA. AnswerHub is critical to the success of our company and we are passionate about where it will take us.”

## ABOUT DZONE SOFTWARE

DZone Software is committed to providing outstanding software and unparalleled customer service. Our goal is to be the world leader in enterprise collaboration and knowledge sharing. DZone Software’s product, AnswerHub, enables organizations to create their own online communities for private and public use. Every day, sites powered by AnswerHub help thousands of users manage big content, big knowledge, and big communities.

For more information, please contact 919-238-7100 or [info@dzonesoftware.com](mailto:info@dzonesoftware.com).

## BENEFITS

Hortonworks has realized the following benefits with AnswerHub:

**COMMUNITY AFFINITY AND GROWTH** At launch, Hortonworks had zero external users, zero external users viewing the site per week and 150,000 page views. Currently, they have over 3,000 external registered users, 15,000 unique users viewing the site per week, and received 800,000 page views in February 2016. The community is experiencing a healthy increase, with a double digit growth per week. Perhaps even more importantly, they are creating a group of fans.

**CENTRALIZED KNOWLEDGE** With AnswerHub, Hortonworks created a knowledge base designed to benefit its technical audience. Users can capture, access and share content, engage in Q&A, and collaborate. Further, AnswerHub is highly scalable and extensible – it can support community growth, as well as rich content and code repositories.

**KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND SELF-SERVICE** Both internal and external users rely on the Hortonworks Community Connection as an online resource. Herring stated, “One answer can feed a multitude of people; with the Hortonworks community, ‘how-to’ questions are answered without the need to find the person who knows the answer or post to Stack Overflow.”

**ADVANCED MODERATION** The Hortonworks community serves both an internal and external audience. With AnswerHub, Hortonworks was able to build a community that limited content access based on user type. AnswerHub also makes it easy to moderate content directly from the interface.

