

# IMPROVING SPARK VENTURES' BUSINESS PROCESSES AND REPORTING TO PROPEL BUSINESS-DRIVEN PHILANTHROPY

“Huron Consulting Group brought the strategic perspective we needed and reconfigured our Salesforce.com platform for internal alignment and maximum efficiency. This new system frees us up to focus on our mission of investing in sustainable solutions that lift communities out of poverty”

**RICH JOHNSON**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
AND CO-FOUNDER OF  
SPARK VENTURES

Spark Ventures is a Chicago-based philanthropic organization that is based on a model of business-driven philanthropy. Founded in 2007, Spark invests financial and human capital to launch social enterprises in the sustainable food and agriculture sector of an emerging market economy. These businesses are an economic development engine that produce locally consumed goods and create jobs for base of pyramid families. The return on investment and majority of profits provide a sustainable revenue stream for high-impact health and education programs to benefit the poorest children in these communities.

## The Need

Spark Ventures needed to implement more efficient processes to generate timely and accurate data and reporting to keep their executive board, management, donors and other stakeholders informed. They are longtime users of the Salesforce.com platform, and wanted to maximize their SFDC investment.

## The Solution

Huron Consulting Group proposed an in-depth HealthCheck analysis of Spark's existing Salesforce.com organization, data, and processes, and recommended a complete rebuild of Spark's Salesforce.com organization. In under a month, the Huron team gathered best practices around the SFDC Foundation Non-Profit Starter Pack (NPSP) and redesigned the system to meet Spark's unique business needs. The Huron team worked carefully to cleanse and map data to the new data model, implement best practices, and improve executive visibility and reporting. NPSP is preconfigured to help manage data about donors, donations, relationships, company affiliations, households and recurring gifts.

## The Results

Spark Ventures' SFDC platform is now set up to allow for easy and accurate input of information, and facilitates timely reporting on key business initiatives. The reimplementation of Salesforce.com resulted in an improved work flow for the users and increased visibility to the executive board.

Among the features of Spark's customized platform:

- A Board Member Dashboard for easy visibility
- Improved tracking of Board members and their contributions
- Improved Campaign and Event tracking using the native Campaign functionality
- Improved visibility into donation pipeline by implementing a new process for identifying and tracking potential donors and donations
- Spark employees were trained on functionality of the system to find and merge duplicate records
- Removed fields that were not being utilized to create a clean/intuitive user interface

Built with scalability in mind, the new system will easily support new growth opportunities in the future.



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