Paltac Corporation, the largest wholesale distributor of health and beauty products in Japan and a longtime InterSystems customer, has a corporate culture of innovating with leading-edge technologies. They are embracing cloud technology to cost-effectively build new solutions.

“Back in 2010, as smart phones began to replace corporate mobile phones, we wanted to utilize them in our business operations,” says Fumiga Katsuo, director of the sales system department in Paltac’s IT strategy division. “Therefore, we planned to create a sales support system that allows information to be shared both inside and outside the company.”

Paltac wanted to build a small pilot application first, then scale it up to an enterprise-wide system. For that reason, they decided to deploy in the cloud. “The elasticity that the cloud provides is very important to us,” says Hideyuki Takahashi, a manager in the IT development department at Paltac. “We don’t have to invest in a lot of hardware. We can ‘rent’ whatever virtual servers we need to satisfy our level of usage, which helps us reduce costs.

“We base our solutions on the InterSystems Caché data platform,” Takahashi continues, “so right from the beginning we looked for a cloud environment that would support Caché. After weighing our options, we chose to deploy on Amazon’s EC2 (Elastic Compute Cloud) environment. Thanks to the excellent and thorough support the engineers at InterSystems provided, we were able to establish a reliable operational structure.”

Paltac deployed Caché in the cloud and started developing for smart phones in June 2011. Six months later, their first information sharing system began operations.
Tetsuya Izumi, a team leader in Paltac’s IT strategy department, was involved with deploying the system in the cloud. He notes, “Caché’s high performance means that we can use fewer servers than we would need if we were using a relational database. We were able to significantly reduce the costs of running in the cloud by using Caché.

“In addition to controlling costs,” Izumi goes on to say, “we were very focused on building a secure system. Three-fold security measures are in place for connecting smart phones to our cloud-based system: authorization with PKI certification, authorization only through previous registration, and SSL connection. Caché’s security model enabled us to implement these measures with ease. Since we started operations, there have been no instances of unauthorized access.”

Hideyuki Takahashi adds, “Another security measure is that we don’t store personal information on the cloud at all. Any sensitive information is stored in an on-premises database, using a structure where the content cannot be understood on its own. On the cloud, we have built and deployed a Caché-specific Web access module that enables secure communication to the in-house database.”

Paltac plans to take advantage of more InterSystems’ technology as they continue to develop more cloud-based applications. “Currently, we are considering installing InterSystems Enterprise Manager. That will allow us centralized control of Caché both on the premises and in the cloud, which will improve our operations and level of security simultaneously,” says Izumi.

“We are also looking at mobile development with the InterSystems Zen Mojo framework,” says Takahashi. “We want to aggressively use mobile devices in our business, and Zen Mojo gives us an easy way to leverage the native capabilities of those devices, as well as enabling highly responsive Web applications.”

Fumiga Katsuo concludes, “Deploying Caché in the cloud has enabled us to create a development infrastructure that does not require a big expense, and allows us to ‘start small,’ with the option for almost limitless scaling. We can quickly respond to various requests aimed at improving operations within the company. We can experiment, we can innovate, and we can ultimately differentiate ourselves from the competition.”