

How Forte partnered with Particle41 to bring a revolutionary online music education platform to market

Problem

The creative team at Forte believes that more music means a better world. To foster that vision, the company's founders, Mark Murtagh and Hunter McGranahan, created an online music education platform to deliver a more powerful learning experience.

"When the concept was born during the COVID lockdown period in 2020, music students and teachers were forced to use voice-based apps like Zoom, FaceTime, and Google Hangouts," said Hunter, who, in addition to being co-founder, is also Forte's Chief Product Officer. "Those platforms were designed to suppress background noise, but they also suppress the sounds that musical instruments make. That made them unacceptable for effective music education."

Undeterred, music students and teachers did their best to use the available platforms. The result was a "nightmare," according to Hunter. "Students were trying to use Zoom on mute while running other audio software in the background in an effort to play for their teachers. That only created more communication problems."

Essentially, the existing platforms were built to enhance and transmit voice at a steady volume, not the subtle highs and lows of music. Mark and Hunter knew that if they could create a purpose-built audio/video communication platform, it would revolutionize the way music lessons are taught online.

The pair searched for a software developer to bring the project to life and found Particle41.

Solution

Particle41 was the perfect partner to help Mark and Hunter get their dream project off the ground. That's because the Particle41 team takes the approach that its purpose is to strengthen its client's internal team.

"As soon as we partnered with Particle41, they staffed us with talented software developers that also included a project manager, a quality assurance person, and someone who served as a chief technology officer," said Hunter. "That's when the fun began. I basically served as a middleman between the Particle41 team and the music teachers. It was the teachers who provided the direction for the development of the software."

It took about thirty days for the Particle41 team to create a proof of concept and another ninety days to develop a beta version of the platform that was ready for users to test. That was enough for Mark and Hunter to demonstrate to a prominent music school that Forte had a viable product. Based on that beta, the school committed to certifying teachers on the Forte platform, and after nearly a year of iterations, Forte launched the platform in 2021.



The Particle41 team has enabled a use case that is changing how music is taught. We couldn't have done what we've accomplished without them.



Hunter McGranahan

Chief Product Officer
Forte

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RESULTS



RECEIVED HELPFUL DEVELOPMENT INPUT

“One of our best features—having a second camera to show a view of finger positions—was an idea contributed by one of the developers supplied by Particle41,” said Hunter. “It was a game changer.”



COMPLETED SUCCESSFUL PRODUCT LAUNCH

Forte launched its platform in 2022, requiring no downloads, no plugins, and no extra software to operate. The platform hosted 1.8 million minutes of music lessons that year.



POSITIONED FOR LAUNCHING NEW CAPABILITIES

“We are just about to launch the Forte Connect marketplace,” said Hunter. “In the new marketplace, students will be able to find and connect with a teacher who is a good match for their skill level, goals, and music choices.”



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