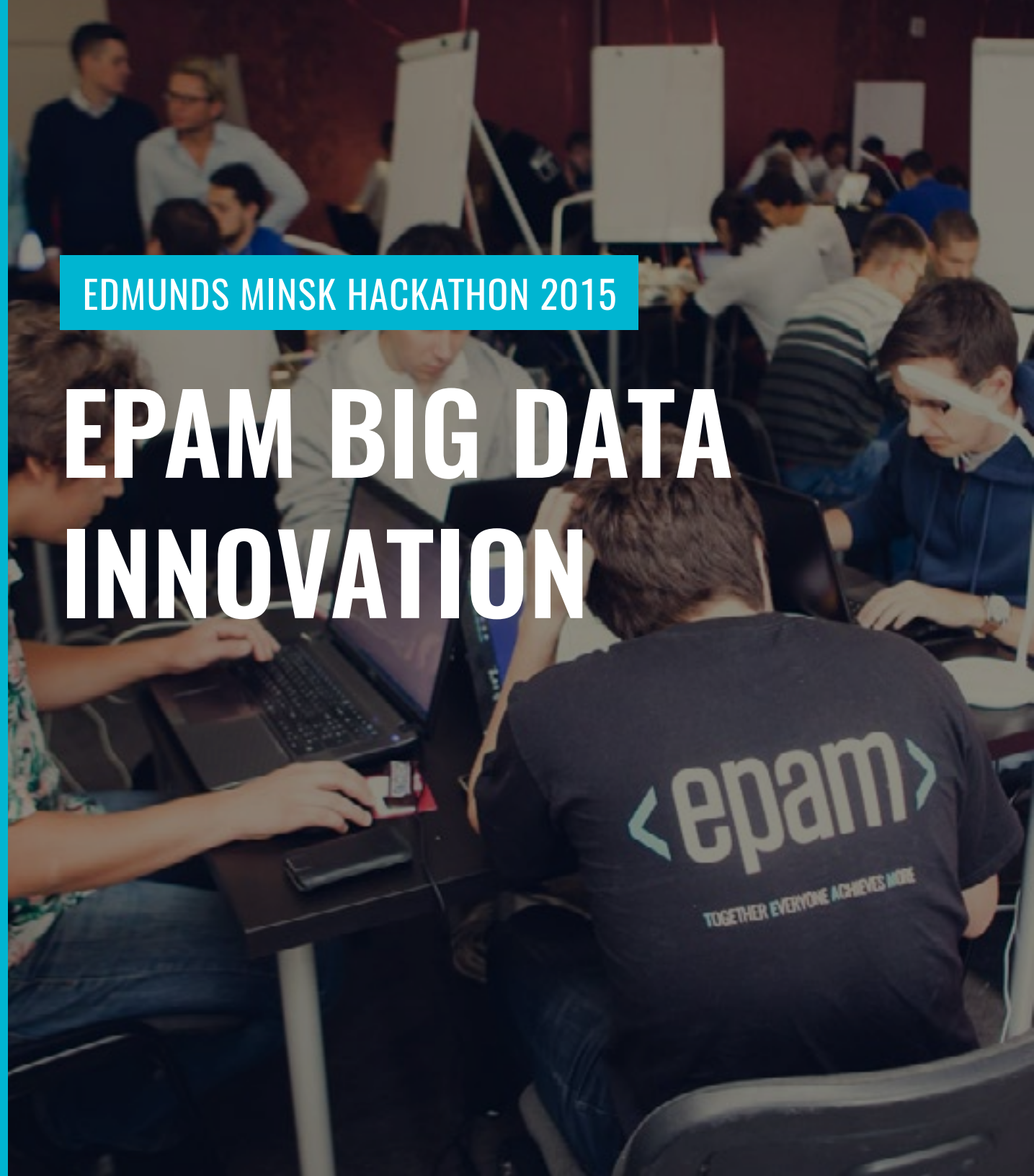

CASE
STUDY

EDMUNDS MINSK HACKATHON 2015

EPAM BIG DATA INNOVATION

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“THE INNOVATIONS WE
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— PHILIP POTLOFF, COO
EDMUNDS.COM



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EDMUNDS.COM IS THE LEADING CAR SHOPPING DESTINATION FOR CAR BUYERS, DEALERS, AND RESEARCHERS IN THE UNITED STATES. WHEN IT COMES TO MAKING THE CAR BUYING PROCESS IN AMERICA EASIER, NO ONE DOES IT BETTER THAN EDMUNDS, WHICH IS WHY EPAM ENGINEERS AND SUBJECT MATTER EXPERTS WERE THRILLED TO PARTNER WITH EDMUNDS FOR A SECOND-ANNUAL HACKATHON IN MINSK, BELARUS.

While last year’s Hackathon focused on mobile strategy and innovation, this year’s focus was to incorporate and innovate around Edmunds’ wealth of proprietary Big Data. Over two days, 15 teams worked tirelessly to put their ideas into motion, all the while competing for a spot in the 2016 Edmunds product roadmap as well as a cash grand prize!

THE CLIENT

Edmunds.com, a long-time EPAM client, arms consumers with the information necessary to “discover, price, and buy the car that is right” for their needs. Providing simply the best, most up-to-date insider data about nearby dealerships, market prices, sales, and car specifications, Edmunds delivers subscription-based paid advertising for car manufacturers and dealers. With Edmunds, potential customers get all of the essential information about the car they’re shopping for before they ever step through the door of a dealership.

THE BACKGROUND

A successful Hackathon is only possible through in-depth planning, collaboration, and training, and that’s exactly what led up to the Edmunds Minsk Hackathon 2015. In early July, EPAM and Edmunds began broadcasting the theme of the event – “Big Data” – and formed a committee to create educational materials regarding Edmunds’ business, products, and the data that drive those for training purposes. To build on these efforts, members of EPAM’s Big Data Competency Center provided resources and trainings for this year’s participants on the Hackathon’s complex theme – a topic that many had never explored before.

THE TEAMS WERE READY FOR AN EPIC WEEKEND OF CODING, PROTOTYPING, AND FRIENDLY COMPETITION.

By September, weekly conference calls and in-person meetings were coordinated with competing teams to enable them to arrive at the Hackathon with ideas that would address Edmunds' most salient pain points. Logistics were finalized to bring teams from the U.S., Russia, and Ukraine to Minsk, and a video production crew was assigned to interview participants and document the entire event. Finally, with everyone up to speed on Edmunds and Big Data, the teams were ready for an epic weekend of coding, prototyping, and friendly competition.



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THE CHALLENGE

The goal of the second-annual Edmunds Minsk Hackathon was to create innovative and effective data products for Edmunds – products that would drive manufacturer and dealer revenue while improving the car-buying experience for consumers. We challenged teams to leverage Edmunds' extensive technology and Big Data infrastructure to create innovative minimum viable products that could dynamically incorporate real-time streaming data and historical data with predictive models. Rising to the challenge, the teams crafted several brand-new approaches to the customer experience.

THE SOLUTION

Following two days of fierce brainstorming, design, and engineering, the teams presented their insights-driven solutions to a panel of judges from Edmunds. Each submission was judged for its level of innovation, time-to-market, and technical feasibility, criteria that many teams fulfilled. Unsurprisingly, the top teams decisively over-delivered on all three.

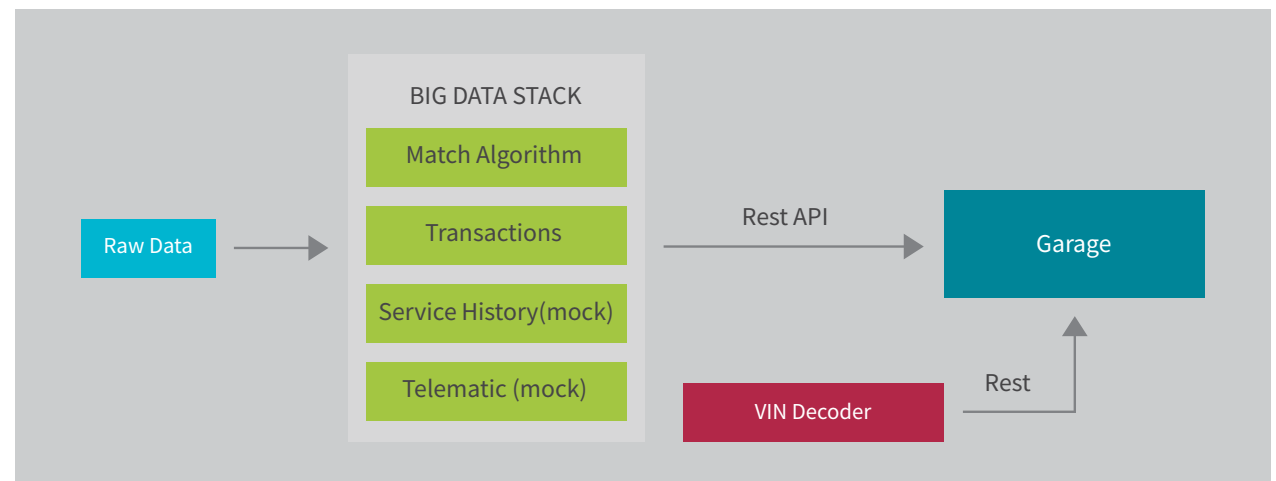
Sometimes, simple ideas are the best ideas, and that's what this year's first-place team brought to the Hackathon. Using over 2GB of Amazon S3 data from Edmunds.com, the team developed an application to integrate click-button calls to action and price graphs based on real-time streaming data into the browsing experience, all designed to drive site visitors to either take action if the car's price is on the downtrend, or wait if the car's price is on the upswing. With this ingenious design, more lead forms are submitted when the price is palatable, and more site visitors return to monitor price graphs when it's not, which in turn increases site traffic.

ALL IN ALL, THE APPLICATION MAKES FOR A MORE INTERACTIVE, INSIGHTS-DRIVEN USER EXPERIENCE THAT GIVES CONSUMERS THE REAL-TIME PRICE DATA THEY NEED TO MAKE INFORMED BUYING DECISIONS THEY CAN FEEL GOOD ABOUT.



The second-place team developed a benchmarking tool that allows Edmunds dealer clients and prospects to see how other dealers in their region are performing by comparison in their sales of Edmunds products. Drawing on Edmunds' clickstream, leads, and salesforce data for other anonymously-displayed neighborhood dealerships, the app features an interactive slider control that displays competing dealer earnings by volume, resulting in a powerful upsell tool that shows Edmunds dealers and prospects the sales they're missing out on – the Edmunds products their competitors are selling, but they aren't just yet. By illustrating local demand for Edmunds products to dealers looking to increase sales, the benchmarking tool demonstrates that dealers are ultimately better off when they sell a more complete bundle of Edmunds products.

ARCHITECTURE DESIGN



Utilizing an impressive architecture that coordinated raw data with multiple match algorithms, the third-place team at this year's Hackathon created Edmunds Garage, an enhancement of the personal account page that allows users to post their own cars for dealers to view and, subsequently, make trade-in offers based on Big Data-generated fair market prices. Dynamically, as customers input data regarding their car's model, mileage, and service history, dealers' price and maintenance offers are automatically adjusted.

OVERALL, EDMUNDS GARAGE IS AN INNOVATIVE TOOL THAT IMPROVES AND AUTOMATES COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CUSTOMER AND THE DEALER, MAKING IT MORE LIKELY THAT A CUSTOMER WILL RETURN TO EDMUNDS.COM WHEN IT'S TIME TO PURCHASE OR TRADE IN FOR THEIR NEXT CAR.

QUESTIONS?
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THE VALUE

“The innovations we discovered at EPAM will be front and center for many of us in the near future,” commented Philip Potloff, Edmunds.com COO, at the awards ceremony. Undoubtedly, the value of the Edmunds Minsk Hackathon 2015 – as with all of EPAM’s Hackathons – is the tremendous ideation generated by such an event, often resulting in many of those same ideas becoming real products in the months following the Hackathon. After all, what could be better for business than completing weeks of brainstorming and product development in just two days?

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE 2015 HACKATHON VIDEO](#)

EPAM HACKATHONS BREED INNOVATION

EPAM is committed to building a culture of innovation, regularly staging hackathons that leverage its diverse community of digital talent from internal competency centers, solution practices, and other internal institutions. Through these events, EPAM showcases the best in front-end UX and back-end software engineering, consistently creating new and innovative solutions that are strategically focused and technically forward-thinking. Indeed, these hackathons are incubators for great ideas – ideas that are frequently born into the future products of EPAM and its partners.