PowerVision Solution

B2B e-Commerce Solution Gives E.F. Bailey a Business Boost

E.F. Bailey Company was quick to recognize the importance of the Internet in its ability to meet the future demands of its manufacturing customers. The company wanted a quick, cost-effective way to capitalize on the around-the-clock availability of the Web, without redesigning its service infrastructure. PowerVision Corporation developed a Business-to-Business e-commerce site to web-enable E.F. Bailey's inventory and distribution services, and pave the way for future growth.

"The e-commerce system cuts through the traditional business barriers. Customers can place orders 24 x 7. It's a win-win solution."

E.F. Bailey processed orders from manufacturing customers through Acclaim 10, a Prophet 21 wholesale distribution system. The system was a valuable repository of information as well as an inventory, pricing, and resource planning tool. However, it required significant customer service support. In addition, E.F. Bailey's static website provided links to product information but did not support online ordering.

The company needed a way to combine the resources of its distribution system, with the convenience and accessibility of the Internet. PowerVision Corporation performed the requisite analysis and design, and delivered a winning solution: an e-business system using IBM's Net.Commerce software to integrate the data of the existing distribution system with a dynamic e-commerce storefront on the Web.

Net.Commerce from IBM is an off-the-shelf software package to build e-commerce websites on the Internet. PowerVision configured the Net.Commerce software for integration with Prophet 21's e-Business Gateway middleware. The Prophet 21 system already contained all of the product information, customer contacts and inventory data. By creating a link to a new Net.Commerce "storefront" on the Web, the data residing in the system could be accessed in real time without the need for duplication or data synchronization. The result was the new, dynamic B2B e-commerce system E.F. Bailey needed to increase its potential.

Accounts are set up for E.F. Bailey customers only, providing secure client access to the B2B e-commerce system. Customers log on to the site using their pre-assigned user-id and password to place orders, receive order confirmation, or monitor order status. Customers also benefit from quantity discounts and customer-specific pricing as set up in the Prophet 21 system.

Business Area:
- e-Commerce

Key Technologies:
- Net.Commerce by IBM
- Acclaim 10 by Prophet 21
- E-Business Gateway
- Lotus Go Web Server
- Net.Data and C++

PowerVision's Role:
- Analysis
- Design
- Development
- Implementation
- Website Design

Orders placed from the E.F. Bailey storefront are communicated to the Prophet 21 system through e-Business Gateway. The order is then processed in the Prophet 21 system like any other order, using e-mail notification as set up in the work flow.

PowerVision's B2B solution has improved customer service in several ways. E.F. Bailey clients now have direct access to an online catalog featuring over 18,000 products. Customers can browse the catalog to view current product prices and up-to-the-minute availability, or find a particular item by key-word search. Orders can still be placed by fax or phone, however the new business-to-business interface allows E.F. Bailey customers to place orders online, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year long. Payment can be made by credit card, purchase order or both. Customers can take advantage of the Quick Order Pad—a shortcut for placing orders by entering a product's item code (SKU)—and an address book feature for managing contact and shipping information.

"The e-commerce system cuts through the traditional business barriers," said Tom Saltness of E.F. Bailey Company. "Our customers have direct access to the information they need, whenever they need it. What's more, they can place orders 24 x 7. It's a win-win solution for us."

PowerVision Corporation's B2B e-commerce solution combines the vast resources of the distribution system with the convenience of the World Wide Web, resulting in a measurable return on investment. E.F. Bailey customers get immediate feedback on orders and product information straight from the Internet, thereby increasing the quality and efficiency of the customer service they receive. The Net.Commerce front end means E.F. Bailey's business can continue to grow without substantially increasing customer service support overhead.

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