



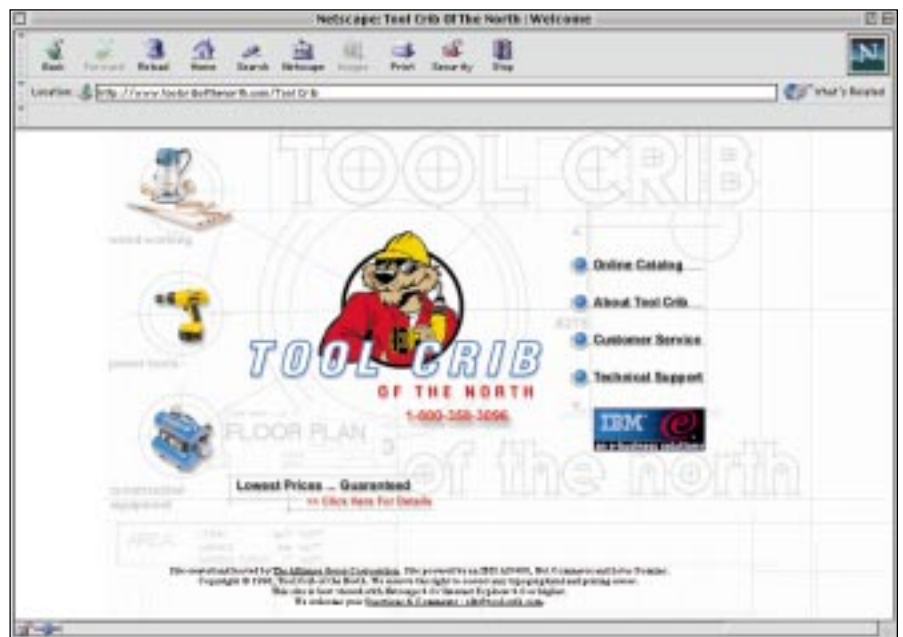
Tool Crib sharpens its edge with Net.Commerce and DB2.

Application	Online tool store
Business Benefits	100% payback in two months; saving of \$5 per order, estimated to accrue to more than \$180,000 by year end; 70,000 visitors each week
Software	IBM Net.Commerce IBM Net.Data® IBM HTTP Server IBM DB2® for AS/400®
Hardware	IBM AS/400
Business Partner	The Alliance Group (TAG)

Contractors rely on a wide variety of tools to shape the world we live in. For most contractors, buying these tools means taking time out of their workday to shop around before making a purchase. Now, however, busy contractors don't need to sacrifice their most productive hours to shop for tools and supplies. By logging on to Tool Crib of the North's new online store, regardless of the time of day, they are guaranteed the best prices on power tools. And, they can have supplies delivered right to their front door.

“Every order placed with Net.Commerce and DB2 saves us \$5 over the cost of placing a traditional catalog order.”

—Steve Kuhlman, Vice President of the Catalog Division and Marketing Department, Tool Crib of the North



Tool Crib of the North has brought its catalog of power tools to the Web, ensuring that its doors are always open for business.

It's about business, not just technology.



Now, professional contractors and weekend craftsmen alike can find the best prices on power tools without having to wait in line.

Tool Crib of the North has been selling power tools through its five retail stores in North Dakota and Minnesota as well as through mail order catalogs since 1948. Now a leader in the mail order tool market, the company has sharpened its competitive edge by deploying an online store, www.toolcribofthenorth.com, powered by IBM Net.Commerce START and IBM DB2 residing on an IBM AS/400 server. The new Web site guarantees the company's doors are open for business 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, making it easier for customers to shop online than through the traditional catalog. "Since deploying our online store four months ago, e-business has accounted for more than five percent of our total direct sales business," says Steve Kuhlman, vice president of the catalog division and marketing department at Tool Crib. "Net.Commerce paid for itself in just eight weeks. It has far surpassed our expectations."

Changing the way Tool Crib does business

In the 50 years since it was established, Tool Crib has grown from a small motor repair shop to a leading source for power tools, with a reputation for quality products and services at competitive prices. Until recently, the company printed over eight million catalogs per year, distributing them mostly to independent contractors, remodelers and woodworkers. Today, the company has the mechanism to provide up-to-date information about products and prices in a way that no printed catalog ever could. "We offer a competitive pricing guarantee that says Tool Crib will beat any advertised price. Net.Commerce software helps us keep our advertised price up to date. If we make a change in our DB2 database, it becomes effective on our Web site immediately," says Kuhlman. "This allows us to keep one step ahead of our competition."

The transition from a printed catalog business to a combination catalog and Web-based business saves Tool Crib overhead costs. It also helps ensure accurate product information and frees up the company's valuable human resources, allowing the staff to focus on providing quality customer service, rather than fielding orders over the phone. "Every order placed with Net.Commerce and DB2 saves us \$5 over the cost of placing a traditional catalog order," says Kuhlman.

"The AS/400 with DB2 provides the scalability to handle the high volume of orders we have been receiving. We have our entire catalog—more than 4,000 items—online, and it continues to grow."

—Steve Kuhlman

A well-oiled machine

Tool Crib worked with IBM Premier Business Partner The Alliance Group (TAG) to design the solution that best met the company's needs. The AS/400 Web server, which is hosted by TAG, uses DB2 for AS/400 as the main catalog repository. "We have five programmers for the AS/400 on staff," says Kuhlman. "We wanted a solution that would make good use of the talent we already have onsite. The AS/400 platform is ideal for our business needs, and now, with Net.Commerce, we are well-prepared for future growth."

Net.Commerce is a commercial Web site development solution that includes a range of software, such as Net.Commerce START, IBM HTTP Server (formerly Domino Go Webserver™), IBM Net.Data and IBM DB2 Universal Database. IBM HTTP Server handles all the requests for information from the Internet browser. "If a customer clicks on a link for a certain product, IBM HTTP Server interprets that click as a command to present the corresponding information in HTML on the Web page," explains Scott Abbott, founder and CEO of TAG. IBM Net.Data provides customizable macros that automate complex functions such as the handling of multitiered pricing, taxation and text searches. When a customer proceeds to the online checkout page, Net.Data extracts the pricing information from DB2 for each item in the shopping cart, adds the appropriate tax, shipping or other fees based on the customer's location and displays the total charge on the Web page. "Net.Data provides powerful tools for creating a user-friendly Web environment," says Abbott. "To the end-user, the functions appear as single mouse clicks, but actually, there is a series of calculations and processes going on behind the scenes. Net.Data also allows our programmers to create and save custom macros for use in future Web site development projects, saving us time and money."

Sensitive information—such as credit card numbers—transferred from the user's browser to the Web site, is secured by industry-standard, 128-bit Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption. Because Net.Commerce supports this encryption method, Tool Crib's customers are assured that buying products online is just as safe as ordering them over the phone or through the mail. Later this year, the company will deploy IBM eNetwork™ Firewall to protect the Web server from unauthorized access through the Internet.

"Net.Commerce paid for itself in just eight weeks.... It has far surpassed our expectations."

—Steve Kuhlman



IBM Net.Commerce allows Tool Crib to offer the best prices on both new and reconditioned tools.

Built for high performance with DB2 and AS/400

The ease of use that the site offers, coupled with its speed and accessibility, have made it very popular. The site is currently host to 70,000 unique visitors each week. The heavy traffic came as a welcome surprise to Tool Crib. "Initially, we underestimated our performance needs," Kuhlman says. "We were planning for only modest growth. Fortunately, the AS/400 server with DB2 provides the scalability to handle the high volume of orders we have been receiving. We have our entire catalog—more than 4,000 items—online, and it continues to grow."

Tool Crib uses another AS/400 server for its back-end order processing. Currently, orders are downloaded once a day and manually entered into the back-end system. Soon, the company will integrate Net.Commerce with its back-end system to automate the order process. One of the developments will include linking the Web site to Tool Crib's inventory system. By accessing the company's warehouse inventory (stored in DB2) and displaying it on the Web page, customers will know if the item they want is in stock or is going to be reordered soon.

Tool Crib looks forward to using Net.Commerce and DB2 to further enhance the content on its Web site. In the future, the company will enrich the Web site with more informative content, such as video clips that demonstrate the proper use of tools or customer-submitted work tips and product reviews. "Net.Commerce and DB2 for the AS/400 provide tools for analyzing our sales activity in a way that helps us better serve our customers," Kuhlman explains. "The products allow us to track valuable information that we, in turn, use in designing the site to meet the specific needs of our customers. The Net.Commerce and DB2 combination is key to creating an interactive community with the kind of valuable content that will make our customers want to come back often."

**For more information,
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Visit us at:
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For more information about
Tool Crib of the North, visit:
www.toolcribofthenorth.com

For more information about
The Alliance Group (TAG), visit:
www.teamtag.com



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