

## Discovery.com profits and pleases with WebSphere Commerce Suite.

### Overview

#### ■ Challenge

Increase shopper-to-buyer conversion rates and the value of an average online sale with greater personalization and more targeted marketing

#### ■ Solution

New online store with functionality to support cross-selling, up-selling and e-spots

#### ■ Why IBM

WebSphere® Commerce Suite was perceived to have the best tools and Java™-based technologies to enable fast time to market, easy and inexpensive product management and site personalization

#### ■ Key Business Benefits

Increased shopper-to-buyer conversion rates and average sale value; fast time to market; shortened development cycle; easier, less costly product management and merchandising



With its new online store based on IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite, Discovery Communications, Inc. has a rich setting for its products and new tools to increase sales.

Is someone you know yearning for a robotic bug or a remote-controlled Stealth Bomber? Gifts and gadgets that capture the imagination through technology are the stock in trade of Discovery.com's online store, as you would expect from a company that produces innovative and entertaining TV programming worldwide. Beginning with the Discovery Channel in 1985, Discovery Communications, Inc. (DCI) has made the Discovery brand synonymous with interesting science and entertaining real-world explorations.

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*—Tom Burke, Senior Vice President, Marketing and E-commerce, Discovery Communications, Inc.*

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## Key Components

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### Software

- IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite Pro Edition, Version 5.1
  - IBM WebSphere Application Server, Advanced Edition
  - IBM VisualAge® for Java
  - IBM Web Sphere Catalog Manager
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Starting in 1997, Discovery.com's online store reached out to armchair adventurers with an e-commerce Web site based on server-side Java code. Enhanced numerous times over the years to incorporate new functions such as shipping rules, user profiles and a frequent buyers program, the e-commerce site grew increasingly complex, expensive to maintain and difficult for business managers to use to administer their product lines.

Says Tom Burke, DCI senior vice president, marketing and e-commerce, "We had custom-coded ourselves into a corner. To increase shopper-to-buyer conversion rates and average sale value, we needed a whole new level of functionality to target and personalize our offerings. We needed a scalable, reliable merchant server with out-of-the box functionality that would create a richer interactive experience for the consumer and lower our costs."

Speed to market was a crucial factor, because the company needed to get its new Web site up and running in time for the holiday season. And, to keep administrative costs down, the company decided to integrate its new e-commerce Web site with existing fulfillment systems.

Reviewing the available e-commerce engines on the market, DCI decided that IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite had the tools and Java 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE)-compliant technologies that would enable rapid integration with legacy systems, fast time to market, as well as easy and inexpensive product management and site personalization.

Developed and deployed in 8 months by DCI's IT staff, the new Discovery.com online store uses WebSphere Commerce Suite Pro Edition, Version 5.1 as its e-commerce engine. IBM WebSphere Application Server functions as a runtime environment for Enterprise JavaBeans (EJB) and JavaServer Pages (JSP). DCI used IBM VisualAge for Java to develop both the business and presentation logic.

*"WebSphere Commerce Suite scales way beyond our expectations. It is stable and reliable. We're in great shape now to attack and accomplish our business objectives."*

*—Skip Holbrook, Project Manager of E-commerce, Discovery Communications*

As expected, visitors to the appealing, easy-to-use new site are converting into buyers at a faster rate, and the dollar amount of an average sale is on the rise. And just as the Web site impresses customers with its pleasing array of gifts and products, the performance of the IBM software is impressing the DCI IT team. Says Skip Holbrook, DCI's project manager of e-commerce, "According to our tests, WebSphere Commerce Suite scales way beyond our expectations. It is stable and reliable. We're in great shape now to attack and accomplish our business objectives."

### Orders automatically relayed to fulfillment

Shoppers at Discovery.com have a wide selection of navigational aids to help them browse through the 2,500 products, from lists of product types and themes to a product directory, search engine and full-page layouts with featured categories.

As soon as an order is placed, a third-party messaging server hub running in WebSphere Application Server extracts the order and formats it into ebXML—a globally developed suite of XML specifications that enables enterprises to communicate data across platforms. The order is routed to a fulfillment center, where another messaging server hub running in WebSphere Application Server extracts order status, product inventory, frequent-buyer and gift certificate information from the fulfillment system database. The order is adjusted to reflect this information and routed back to the online store, where the WebSphere Commerce Suite database is updated.

Says Holbrook, "Thanks to the open-standards design of WebSphere Commerce Suite, we were able to use the messaging middleware of our choice and apply the latest Web services technology to integrate components across our company."

*"The tools provided with WebSphere Commerce Suite will enable us to do business more successfully than we could before—with less effort and lower costs."*

*—Tom Burke*



*Selling gifts online that captivate the imagination calls for WebSphere Commerce Suite, a commerce engine that stirs the impulse to buy.*

### **Quick development of catalogs and marketing campaigns**

For product management on the Web site, DCI relies on IBM WebSphere Catalog Manager. Using Catalog Manager, merchandisers for the Discovery.com online store can easily generate and edit product information in the WebSphere Commerce Suite database. WebSphere Commerce Suite then automatically generates Web pages with the latest information. Burke comments, "With WebSphere Catalog Manager and WebSphere Commerce Suite, IBM gives us a well-thought-out information model for online commerce, complete with the referential integrity that keeps information consistent no matter where it appears."

For customized marketing campaigns, the company uses IBM WebSphere Commerce Accelerator, a component of WebSphere Commerce Suite. WebSphere Commerce Accelerator provides DCI merchandisers with an intuitive interface for constructing marketing campaigns tailored to a shopper's buying behavior. Using the Brokat Rules Engine—also part of WebSphere Commerce Suite—DCI can make gift recommendations for shoppers or tailor offerings to user profiles.

"The tools provided with WebSphere Commerce Suite will enable us to do business more successfully than we could before—with less effort and lower costs," says Burke.

### **Faster development cycles**

Now that DCI's staff has experience with J2EE technology, future enhancements of the site should take far less time. "Last year we implemented user profiles on the site, and it took eight months to develop using our existing code," Burke says. "This year we created a whole site in the same amount of time using WebSphere Commerce Suite. Next year we'll be creating new features and functions in a few weeks or days."

### **For more information**

Please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner.

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Corporate Marketing  
New Orchard Road  
Armonk, NY 10504  
U.S.A.

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02-02  
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G325-1923-00