WebSphere® software

Strengthen customer, supplier and employee relationships by delivering personalized retail experiences.

Today's retailers face many challenges. Fierce competition. Industry consolidation. Slim margins. To meet these challenges, you need to provide dynamic, real-time interactions across—and beyond—your enterprise. In the store. On the Web. Over wired and wireless devices. Be ready to respond to any circumstance—whether generated by consumers, market fluctuations or global supply shifts. Give your customers, employees, partners and suppliers instant, personalized access to product information, promotions and services. Seize new growth opportunities while maximizing operational efficiencies. With WebSphere® business portal software from IBM, you can meet today's retail challenges with confidence. Secure in your ability to respond quickly, intelligently and flexibly to customer needs, spikes in demand or volatile market conditions.

A portal to success

To succeed in a highly competitive, ever-changing industry, many retailers are leveraging business portal technology. Business portals provide a single point of interaction for customers, partners, suppliers and employees to access company and product information, business processes and people, and complete order and payment transactions.

With WebSphere business portal software, you can deploy multiple portal solutions that personalize interactions with customers and partners, empower your workforce, streamline critical business processes and optimize your existing assets—while helping you achieve a fast return on investment. WebSphere business portal software establishes a fully aligned and efficient framework from which to launch business-to-business (B2B), business-to-employee (B2E) and business-to-consumer (B2C) initiatives.

WebSphere business portal on demand solutions can help you:

- *Create a personalized e-business workplace that allows you to provide valuable content to influence customers and assist employees.*

- *Build collaborative workspaces to plan sales initiatives and develop new products.*

- *Protect sensitive customer and employee information from unauthorized access.*

- *Streamline store operations through Web-based ordering, continuous inventory replenishment and optimized stock management.*

- *Leverage an integrated multichannel retailing framework that allows customers to interact with you from all channels—point-of-sale, Web, kiosk, contact center or mobile device.*

- *Capture and deploy best practices across all channels to provide a consistent user experience.*

As the cornerstone of business portal technology, business portals can give your employees, partners, suppliers and customers:

- *A single point of interaction across channels and divisions – without having to manage multiple systems or data.*
- *Personalized access to relevant, business-critical information about products, services, prices and inventory.*
- *An individualized experience through dynamic content, campaigns and promotions.*
- *Context-based information and capabilities determined by role, task or geographic location.*
- *The ability to collaborate about product design, product information or price synchronization.*
- *An integrated, security-rich workplace for business content and applications to help you securely manage your most critical resources.*

Access information quickly and reliably

One of the biggest challenges you face in today's retail industry is dealing with information overload—sorting the relevant data from the irrelevant. You need to manage multiple inventories, detailed product information and customer account information. And understand what your customers want, and how they want to buy it.

Having a single point of instant access to critical product, customer and supplier information—across multiple channels and devices—is crucial to your success. As consumers become more comfortable shopping on the Web, customer loyalty is increasingly elusive. If customers can't find what they're looking for, they move on. Make it easy for them to quickly and easily locate the products they need. Give customers the ability to make intelligent, confident and informed choices by providing instantaneous access to detailed product data and up-to-the-minute pricing and inventory information.

Business portal solutions aggregate structured and unstructured information, enabling you to better understand and leverage relationships between information, people, processes and user activity throughout your business. Employees, customers and suppliers can retrieve reliable, real-time data where, when and how they choose—through desktop PCs, conventional and wireless phones, handheld devices, point-of-sale systems and self-service kiosks. Through user-based customization capabilities, end users can personalize your site to display only applications and information relevant to them.

Through business portals, customers can perform multiple activities from a single screen. Search one or more catalog sections while checking order status, and at the same time view their shopping carts—all instantaneously updated and sharing the same information. Gain direct access to detailed and personalized product content, manage business con-tracts and view relevant warranty information. Or quickly find local service and logistics partners, select shipping alterna-tives, track orders and request real-time interactive customer service. All from a single, unified point of interaction highly tailored to your customers' specific needs and interests.

Employees with the right information—delivered directly to their own personalized portal pages—can solve everyday business problems efficiently, without wasting time sorting through information that isn't relevant to their jobs. Reduce human resources and training costs by providing fast, easy access to benefits information and company procedures. Customer service representatives—and nearly anyone else in your organization—can access all information related to a particular customer or product and immediately help customers with urgent questions to provide superior customer service. Suppliers and partners can have access to pertinent, timely information—like contract terms and conditions, pricing and inventory levels—to help optimize sales while increasing operational efficiencies. With a high level of coordination along your value chain, you can increase your flexibility to respond on demand to unpredictable changes in product availability, labor, competition, capital markets and the needs of customers, suppliers and employees. And create a superior buying experience that increases sales and improves your competitive advantage.

WebSphere business portal software also offers a content repository designed to grow with your enterprise. Capture, index, store, search and distribute almost any type of digital content, including HTML and XML Web content, document images, electronic office documents and rich media, like digital audio and video. Content-management capabilities enable you to easily leverage your information assets to help grow your business. Improve customer satisfaction. And increase employee productivity.

Create customized environments to meet diverse business needs
It's no secret that consumers want customized, dynamic content and promotions, a personalized buying experience and a choice between assisted and self-service. If you can make your site more efficient and useful with targeted content and enhanced services—including multiple touchpoints for sales and returns—you can attract and retain more customers and potentially increase sales.

With WebSphere business portal software, you can help dynamically tailor the content displayed to different users and groups, including the ability to:

- *Send product update e-mails to past purchasers.*
- *Present unique offers based on customer needs, purchase history and user demographics.*
- *Personalize customer Web pages and enable customers to individualize their own views and home pages.*
- *Allow customers to access their personal account information, purchase histories and order status.*
- *Display seasonal catalogs or present customized catalogs to target specific customers and market segments.*
- *Provide locale-specific interactions with appropriate products, language, currency and tax terms.*

Personalized content based on past account activity means your customers don't have to re-enter information to get what they need. That saves customers—and your customer service staff—valuable time and can ultimately reduce costs. And with single sign-on capabilities, your customers and employees don't have to sign on separately to every application they use.

Your employees, partners and suppliers can also benefit from personalized, role-based content. By customizing business rules, you can show a customer service representative or sales professional product news or information specific to the products each sells. Give partners access to prenegotiated business policies online, including pricing, service levels, and shipping and payment terms. And allow suppliers to view pending orders and supply levels to help better forecast future demand.

Collaborate to improve productivity and business relationships

The ability to collaborate and communicate with your team members, customers and partners can make or break a revenue opportunity or sales strategy. Collaboration technologies can help you establish shared team workspaces in a central, safe location on the Web, speed communication among team members and customers, drive product innovation and accelerate time to market.

Move beyond transactions to discover new ways to interact and build stronger relationships within and outside your enterprise. Give your employees instant messaging and collaboration tools to help them communicate quickly and work smarter, regardless of location. Set up group calendars, assign tasks and share work plans and best practices. Provide real-time communication and detailed product knowledge that can significantly build customer confidence

and ensure repeat visits to your site. Get together with partners, suppliers and employees in online conference spaces to share information, participate in sales initiatives and jointly develop future plans. There, you can make decisions quickly without traveling—improving overall productivity and lowering costs.

Reduce costs through operational efficiencies

It's no surprise that in today's marketplace, the success of your business depends on the strength of your IT resources. Customers, suppliers, partners and employees rely on your business systems and networks. When the resources aren't available, the cost to you can be steep. Lost productivity. Forfeited sales. Excess inventory. Keeping the competitive advantage requires the capability to connect internal and external applications to exchange information reliably. So you can adapt quickly to customer, employee, partner and supplier needs while maintaining or even improving the quality of existing services.

With WebSphere business portal software, you can leverage your systems and those of your partners and suppliers to reduce costs, increase the value of existing assets and increase operating efficiencies. With your IT systems adjusting to the speed of your business ideas—and your business staff in control of value chain processes—you can shorten your time to market and drive down costs.
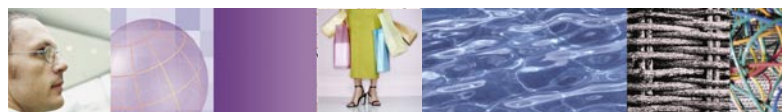
Improve visibility of inventory stored in various warehouse facilities across your distribution network to ensure customers find what they need, when they need it—minimizing lost sales and increasing inventory turns. Improve demand forecasting and distribution planning by integrating merchandising systems. Align human resources and financial information to speed payroll and benefits updates. An effective portal strategy can provide the flexibility you need to optimize, manage and align business processes and IT initiatives throughout your company.

Analyze and improve portal effectiveness
To stay competitive, anticipate customer demand and capitalize on your business investments, you need to understand how users utilize your portal—and then act on that knowledge. With this knowledge, you can turn customer information into competitive assets by offering the right products to the right customers at the right time.

WebSphere business portal software offers enterprise-level Web analytics tools that can transform seemingly random Web data into valuable e-business intelligence by providing in-depth analysis of trends, marketing initiatives, usage, performance, content and transactions. Capture information about consumer demand and purchasing history. Determine the effectiveness of each channel—as well as campaigns and promotions—and enhance service to your best customers. Identify future needs and forecasts of your inventory requirements to respond on demand to competitive pressures. And strengthen customer loyalty and satisfaction.

With this information at your fingertips, you can continually improve performance and maximize the value of your portals.Profit by knowing your customers—and your business—better. WebSphere business portal software can help you:

- *Segment, target, plan, execute and measure marketing initiatives to promote the products that satisfy customers' needs—and drive your revenue.*
- *Provide targeted news, marketing information, campaigns and promotions based on an individual's profile, preferences and actions on the site.*
- *Track results of campaigns and coupons.*
- *Determine how potential customers are navigating through your site to identify trends or the most effective way to structure product information.*
- *Leverage Web page and content analysis to gain information about the performance and structure of your site, including information about duplicate pages, unavailable resources, broken links and content with excessive load sizes.*

Provide a secure user experience
Portals you build, deploy and maintain using WebSphere business portal software rely on security-rich technology to support high-volume, personalized transactions. With authentication and access-control services for e-business and enterprise applications and resources, you can safeguard customer, supplier and employee connectivity and build trust.

You can also manage the growth of your business more effectively even as your IT systems become more complex. Control escalating management costs. And directly tackle the difficulties of implementing security policies across a wide range of Web and application resources. The result? Your customers can use your portals safely and reliably, while you help reduce deployment time and cut costs for new e-business on demand™ applications.

A complete solution for business portals

WebSphere business portal software from IBM can help you face the challenges in today's retail industry by delivering a comprehensive e-business on demand solution to quickly build and deploy personalized, highly scalable portals for your customers, employees, partners and suppliers. Whether you're just getting started in e-business or you're ready to optimize existing investments. Simplify and speed access to product, account and supply information for everyone along your value chain. And help reduce the costs of building and maintaining access to your portals.

WebSphere business portal software is built on and includes IBM WebSphere Application Server technology. With its robust development tools and a flexible e-business infrastructure based on open, industry standards like Java™ technology and Web services, WebSphere software provides a robust foundation platform to help you build sophisticated B2B, B2C and B2E portals that respond to the unique needs of your users. Whether your focus is on Web-based transactions, point-of-sale kiosks, self-checkout services, dynamic inventory or collaborative workspaces, WebSphere business portal software can help you deliver fast, flexible solutions that drive consistent, efficient service and long-term competitive advantage.

For more information

To learn more about WebSphere business portal solutions for the retail industry, or to find out how IBM can help you develop a retail portal strategy to meet your unique business requirements, visit:

ibm.com/websphere/businessportals

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