



Customer Success Story

Okaidi
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Retail Industry

IBM WebSphere Portal - Express gives a boost to Okaidi's brand image
Paris - 25 September 2003. Okaidi, a French fashion design company for children up to 14 with nearly 300 company-owned stores and franchises, has chosen WebSphere Portal - Express as the ideal tool to expand its intranet portal to support its international growth strategy

Okaidi is a long-time customer of IBM and, four years ago, the group migrated its messaging system to Lotus Domino. So it's a natural step for Okaidi to turn to WebSphere Portal - Express to develop its intranet portal.

"We started the project in December 2002," said Intranet project manager Gilles Verstrepen. "Our goal was to open up a differentiated information channel bringing together all the Domino document databases which had been separately designed and developed over the years. WebSphere Portal - Express seemed just the tool needed to aggregate the whole into one single interface and relieve the messaging system of all the reports, statistics and other information that had been cluttering it up."

In addition to preserving and building on existing resources, Okaidi's international expansion over the last two years was a key factor in the company's decision. For this reason it was essential to have a product that was intrinsically easy to maintain and deploy – and this is precisely the case with IBM's solution.

The watchword is flexibility. As things stand, the portal is open to the 150 staff at Okaidi's headquarters. But the company also has 280 stores worldwide and these will start to use the portal as they physically connect one after the other to the network. Deployment is going ahead steadily. "In no way do we want to bring about a tunnel effect. By that I mean developing 200 pages and throwing them all online at once!" said Gilles Verstrepen. For practical reasons it has been decided to operate on a module basis. The merchandising and communication staff were the first to access the site with the internal newsletter coming online. "We want to proceed at a fast pace and through an iterative process. In any case, as an SMB it would have been impossible to dive headlong into a huge transformation that would have completely disrupted our company's organization", Gilles Verstrepen went on to say. This is where the flexibility of WebSphere Portal - Express comes in since the solution enables new features such as document sharing and forums to be added little by little. "The next step will be to integrate LOB applications specifically re-developed for the intranet." Yet another benefit of Okaidi's IBM solution is that resources required are far from excessive. "We started out working with a local partner. Now, I work alone with the support of a developer and a computer graphics designer," explained Gilles Verstrepen. It must also be said that we benefit from "wide-ranging and top quality" documentation from IBM as well as access to the knowledge base on IBM's site enabling large-scale resource sharing. "We are now looking forward to version 5 to take advantage of the new collaborative components!"

About Okaidi

The Okaidi fashion brand was launched in September 2000. It targets the childrenswear market for boys and girls up to 14. Headquartered in Roubaix (in the North of France), the company owns or franchises 200 stores in France and some 70 retail outlets in eight countries abroad.

The group also owns the OBAÏBI and OKSport brands, OBAÏBI being a new concept specifically aimed at the under-5's and OKSport a new sports line for 4- to 14-year-olds. Okaïdi employs 1,300 staff including 150 at the headquarters in Roubaix. Last year, the company's revenue amounted to 170 million euro. This year, staff numbers are expected to increase to 1,500, including 180 at the headquarters. In addition, stores should number 280 and an increase in revenue to 220 million euro is forecast. For more information about Okaïdi, visit www.okaidi.com.

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For more information about WebSphere Portal visit ibm.com/websphere/portal

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