



Anaconda Sports speeds up e-commerce site, increases sales 30-40% during busy season.

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Mid-size sports equipment dealer needed to maximize responsiveness to its online customers and minimize costs

■ **The Solution**

IBM @server xSeries® servers, attached to IBM FASTT Storage Area Network, running IBM WebSphere® Commerce Suite 5.5 and WebSphere Application Server 4.0, IBM DB2 Universal Database™ software and three Linux distributions — RedHat 7.2, SuSE 7.3 and Turbolinux 7.0

■ **Why IBM**

IBM provided a full-featured e-commerce solution at a price below other offerings

■ **The Benefits**

Increases sales 30-40 percent over prior busy season and expects to double revenues in 2003, automates the procedure to process orders from two days to a matter of seconds, optimizes human resources to boost sales, and eliminates Microsoft® licensing fees

Striking out online

Just a year ago, Anaconda Sports (www.anacondasports.com)—one of the largest independent sporting goods dealers in the United States—could not handle the surging volume of hits it received on its popular e-commerce site.

Things went particularly bad during Little League and Babe Ruth baseball seasons, the busiest time of the year when customers go online to buy balls, bats, gloves and other baseball equipment—Anaconda Sports' biggest sellers.

“At three in the afternoon, you could place an order online and go out and eat a sandwich and a Web page would still be loading. It was ridiculously slow—we just couldn't handle the traffic,” says Rob Meyer, director of Internet Services, Anaconda Sports.

The sluggish site caused sales to drop off 10 percent. But Meyer was mostly concerned about all the customers who might never return. “People click on a site and it doesn't load, they're gone. We needed to speed up the site or risk losing customers forever.”

Old ways had to go

Founded in 1902 as Kaye Sports, the Kingston, New York-based company has become a popular provider of sports equipment with stores throughout the Northeast. When Anaconda Sports launched its e-commerce site in 1996, it quickly expanded to a national audience.

“We made the switch from the Microsoft 2000 Server to Linux, and are happy with the system change, particularly because of the cost avoidance that comes with moving from proprietary software to open source.”

—Rob Meyer, director of Internet Services, Anaconda Sports

However, when declining online revenues became evident in early 2003, the company approached IBM to help turn things around. Among the key changes to accelerate online business, Anaconda needed to automate its slow procedure to process an order. "It took two days to print a customer's order, verify the credit card number, check inventory and re-enter the data for shipping. It was a long and inefficient process," Meyer says.

Additionally, Anaconda Sports, which operated three different online stores, needed to integrate the order entry and inventory systems of each store into one efficient system. As part of that drive to lower costs, Meyer also wanted to get rid of the licensing fees that the company paid to Microsoft for its proprietary Windows® 2000 server product.

Transforms site

With the help of integrator Strategic Computer Solutions, Inc. (www.scsinet.com), an IBM Business Partner, Anaconda Sports transformed its e-commerce site by implementing IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite software. Strategic Computer Solutions, Inc. hosts the site on IBM **@server** xSeries servers running DB2® database management software, which manages Anaconda's 5,000 online products.

WebSphere Commerce Suite changed everything, Meyer says. The online site stopped crashing

and Web pages load normally for customers. The three online stores are now controlled under one system, increasing responsiveness to customers. Anaconda has also begun using WebSphere Commerce Suite's marketing tools, such as online coupons, to boost sales.

The IBM solution also automated the ordering-verification-shipping process, reducing a two-day procedure to a matter of minutes. That freed online sales people to move to custom sales, where they could generate revenue as opposed to doing data entry work.

Finally, Strategic Computer Solutions, Inc. helped Anaconda transition from Microsoft 2000 Server to a Linux platform. The open system not only "got rid of Microsoft licensing fees," Meyer says, "but Linux gave us a more scalable, cost-effective platform for going forward."

On track to double revenues

After one busy spring season with the IBM solution, Anaconda Sports' revenues are up 30-40 percent over the prior season. Based on that level of success, Meyer expects to double revenues in 2003, due largely to the flexibility, responsiveness and cost effectiveness of the WebSphere Commerce and Linux solution.

The whole online operation is now more flexible to meet future demand, whatever that might be, Meyer adds. "For the first time going into a busy season, we're not wondering if we can

handle it. We know we're ready. We're totally prepared to respond to our customers quickly and efficiently."

For more information

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