



No Fear rises above retail fray with brand-focused online presence.

Application	Online B-to-C retail sports gear outlet
Business Benefits	Online sales expected to comprise 10% of revenues within two to three years; high-exposure advertising channel costs 90% less than traditional media; projected 30% growth in international sales; projected 25% to 30% of customers expected to purchase online
Software	IBM Net.Commerce IBM DB2® Universal Database™ Enterprise Edition for AIX® IBM WebSphere™ Payment Manager IBM SecureWay® Firewall
Hardware	IBM RS/6000®
Business Partner	Direct Systems Support

Ever wonder where the boarders and bikers on ESPN get their gear? If you don't see it in your local shop, maybe you haven't looked hard enough. But according to No Fear—a Carlsbad, California-based manufacturer of young men's activewear and gear—you shouldn't have to look hard at all.

At first glance, it would seem that No Fear should have no problem putting its products in customers' hands. Its gear is sold through major retailers in all 50 states and in 75 other countries. No Fear's logo is splattered over gear and athletes at the X Games, motocross races and other national sporting events. Still, the company was looking for a way to stand out from the

myriad brands competing for shelf and rack space at major department stores and specialty shops.

“It was already September when we began to work on the online store, but by November 1st we were ready to launch it. Two days later, NoFear.com was selected as Yahoo’s ‘Site of the Day.’”

—Kevin Rozynek, Director of Professional Services, Direct Systems Support



Turbocharged by Net.Commerce and DB2 Universal Database, this site provides instant gratification to a consumer base that won't sit still.

It's about business, not just technology.



Willing to dig in and get their hands dirty, the team from Direct Systems Support and 1st Net Technologies raced to the finish line, launching the online store in less than 60 days.

What No Fear needed was more focused exposure outside conventional media. The company wanted to look beyond merely expanding its 150-person brick-and-mortar operation—which included two area factory stores. No Fear wanted to leverage the Internet savvy of its targeted consumers, 15 to 25 year-old males, to grow its direct sales.

Working with IBM Premier Business Partner Direct Systems Support (DSS) and Web design firm 1st Net Technologies, No Fear created an online store using IBM Net.Commerce PRO (now part of the IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite family), IBM WebSphere Payment Manager (formerly IBM Payment Server™), IBM DB2 Universal Database Enterprise Edition V6.1 and IBM RS/6000 servers.

Launched in less than 60 days, the site is expected to generate 10 percent of the company's revenues within two to three years. Vice President of Operations Eric Baker projects that 25 percent to 30 percent of No Fear's customers will eventually purchase online, with the rest buying at a local retailer as a result of being exposed to the online store.

“Our biggest return on investment is the massive exposure we're getting,” Baker says. “The Web site probably gives us a million dollars worth of advertising for about 10 percent of the cost of traditional media.”

IBM e-business software stands out among e-commerce offerings

Through the Internet No Fear has established a direct sales channel without shelling out millions of dollars to open and manage retail franchises. The site offers more than 2,500 items—including apparel, accessories, footwear and tech gear—to customers in the United States. In a few months, No Fear will be accepting international orders.

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– Eric Baker, Vice President of Operations, No Fear

Baker explains his strategy for selecting the software to run the online store. “Basically, it came down to a lot of research,” he says. “I spoke with software vendors and big-name retailers and read the trade press to see what kind of software could meet No Fear’s retailing demands. For example, our online store had to be able to handle orders for products with multiple colors and size options. We were also concerned about transaction security, and we wanted to be able to log our customer information so we could use it later for marketing analysis.”

“Time and again,” he continues, “Net.Commerce came up as the number one choice for a fully functional e-commerce solution. Together with the DB2 database, it looked like a strong, well thought-out product that could grow with our needs — not just our current needs, but the ones that we’ll think of down the road as well.”

No Fear’s e-business knows no boundaries

No Fear’s quest for a Net.Commerce solution provider ended with a recommendation from 1st Net, which pointed No Fear in the direction of IBM Business Partner Direct Systems Support (DSS). Kevin Rozynek, director of professional services at DSS, recalls: “It was already September when we began to work on the online store, but by November 1st we were ready to launch it. Two days later, NoFear.com was selected as Yahoo’s ‘Site of the Day.’”

DSS Senior Systems Consultant Mark Steele used the scripting language of Net.Commerce to build the macros that provide most of the commerce functionality on the site. No Fear selected NOVA as the payment clearinghouse, using WebSphere Payment Manager as the payment gateway. “WebSphere Payment Manager integrates seamlessly with Net.Commerce,” Steele notes. “It required very little customization for the No Fear site.”

“So much of this relies on the DB2 database. It’s really the nuts and bolts of the whole operation. And it has been extremely reliable and efficient.”

*—Mark Steele, Senior Systems Consultant,
Direct Systems Support*



Soon, customers from Ontario to Okinawa will be able to order No Fear gear online — in their own language — and have it delivered locally.

DB2 Universal Database for AIX stores the No Fear catalog and logs customers' billing and shipping information in a local table before uploading the data to No Fear's back-end ordering and accounting systems. "So much of this relies on the DB2 database," Steele says. "It's really the nuts and bolts of the whole operation. And it has been extremely reliable and efficient."

1st Net, in conjunction with London-based design agency Wax New Media, designed the front-end interface using Macromedia Flash 4 Web animation. This technology was an ideal choice to impart the dynamic visual style No Fear applies to all of its communications. To make sure No Fear's energetic site performs at its peak even as the online customer base soars, DSS set up NoFear.com on an IBM RS/6000 F50 server, which it manages out of an ISP facility in San Diego.

No Fear hasn't experienced a single glitch since the site was launched. "To improve availability even further, we're planning to install a backup RS/6000 server and implement HACMP to provide failover capabilities," Steele adds. IBM SecureWay Firewall, running on an RS/6000 43P server, safeguards No Fear's extensive product, financial and corporate data.

When No Fear commences international e-commerce, it plans to fulfill the orders from locally based warehouses, allowing international customers to avoid customs or other import taxes. With customized pages for different countries and an international dealer locator on the Web site, No Fear also hopes to drive more customers to local retailers to ask for No Fear products.

"With the Web site driving online and in-store sales," Baker says, "we expect our international market will grow by as much as 30 percent, comprising between 33 percent to 45 percent of our total sales over the next five years. With IBM, we know we're dealing with a company that will be around to support our growing online channel—through those five years and well beyond."

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02-00
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