

Basics

Emhart Glass's president wanted an e-commerce presence, specifically a one-stop portal where customers could come for all support needs.

Challenge

No one at Emhart Glass had the technical background, or any knowledge of languages such as Java, to create these Web solutions.

Solution

Emhart Glass application development manager, Alan Batchelor downloaded and installed mrc's m-Power and within a few hours he began generating Java-servlet applications that could run on WebSphere Portal.

To his way of thinking, this e-commerce project was really just the tip of the iceberg. Java-based portal apps could mean so many more possibilities and improvements for Emhart Glass, and he wanted to start building those solutions too.

"I am completely sold on Portal solutions. They just make sense. The idea of having self-contained applications residing on the same page, some collaborating with each other, some standalone. The portal functionality of being able to place these portlets on a page and allowing users to configure their portals just like they would configure their desktop."

Value

The most exceptional part of this story is the volume and breadth of myriad applications that Alan created to give Emhart Glass much more comprehensive Java Web solutions than they could have imagined.

There are concrete cases where his foresight has clearly paid off, "I created our supplier portal, and then I got wind that someone in another department was preparing to hire a consulting company to create a similar system from scratch. I contacted them, and they took a look at what I had already built. With a few minor tweaks, it was exactly what they had been looking for.

The difference was, I built mine in days. I shudder to think at how much we saved by avoiding a start-to-finish outside consulting project." And he adds, "I feel sure m-Power has paid for itself many times over."



Supplier Portal:

Emhart Glass rates its suppliers based on delivery, pricing, which had become cumbersome. "In order to negotiate prices and maintain communication, every month our users were sending emails, faxes, and various other methods of communication to let suppliers know how they were doing, and what their current ratings were. In the screen below, you'll see one application that displays Emhart Glass's ratings. Emhart Glass determines formula of order records, on-time deliveries, prices, etc. But, now that this rating communication is provided online, it also gives suppliers a forum and instant opportunity to defend reports.

They can explain late deliveries, settle disputes, change purchase orders, and as a benefit to Emhart Glass, this new, more accurate rating system takes all of the guesswork out of applying supplier ratings and provides a dialogue from which pricing negotiations and dispute resolutions can begin," explains Batchelor.

This new system provides benefits to both suppliers and Emhart Glass in another way. Suppliers no longer need to fax prices over, and Emhart Glass no longer needs to have a person enter and re-enter the data into their ERP. Now suppliers can update the pricing right into the system.

Additionally, Alan also built the following systems and application sites: Dashboard, Logic Manual, Details Inquiry, Breakdown by Facility, and a customer care portal.



Wireless Applications:

Alan has also moved into the wireless realm, with some creative (and incredibly useful) applications that can run on cell phones and Blackberry devices. And, there was just one tool at his fingertips...capable of bringing all of his visions into focus: m-Power.

These wireless applications allow Emhart Glass's mobile staff, such as sales representatives to perform a number of different functions, including a customer search, pulling a report, searching for contacts, tracking devices such as a Blackberry or other PDA device. Additionally, Alan even built in a convenient capability with m-Power to allow users to access legacy applications via the Web if they need to.

An additional consideration that Alan brought up for Web-based wireless is also a matter of security, "if you lose your PDA or cell phone, what if your data falls into the wrong hands? If you use a Web-based wireless application, you upload/access information via a password. And, if you lose your phone, you just get a new phone. No data is lost, no critical information can be downloaded. It's all secure."

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