



IBM Case Study

Boscov's Department Stores

<http://www.boscovs.com/>

5000-9999 Employees/Students

IBM in partnership with [Hyperion Solutions Corporation](#)

Boscov's sells smarter with DB2 software solution from IBM.

"Having a new data warehouse which we can query with DB2 OLAP Server and optimize with leading-edge IBM DB2 Tools allows our merchandise buying community to make more informed business decisions."

–Kevin Eberhart, Director of Database Administration, Boscov's Department Store

Application

Data warehouse solution for tracking reports on sales, inventory and orders for department store merchandise buyers

Business Benefits

Daily sales reports as opposed to weekly reports previously, enabling more agile business decisions; cost savings and improved system maintenance as result of IBM DB2® Tools

Software

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Hardware

IBM eServer® zSeries® 900; IBM eServer pSeries® 650

Business Partner

Hyperion Solutions Corporation

From clothing to fit every occasion, to drapes, sofas and exercise equipment, department stores are still the only retail outlets that deliver on the promise of the good life for families. For Boscov's Department Stores (Boscov's)--the largest family-owned department store in the U.S.--meeting the needs of growing families has meant acquiring more stores, and streamlining its IT systems to provide employees with tools for better merchandising decisions.

Boscov's currently operates 40 stores in Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, New York and Maryland. Based in Reading, Pennsylvania, the company has 9,000 employees. The chain adds one or two stores a year, and carries approximately 700,000 SKUs.

With so many items for sale--and most products available in different styles, colors and sizes--having up-to-date, readily accessible sales information on specific products was difficult. For the 90 merchandise buyers responsible for ordering products and keeping popular items in stock, weekly sales reports weren't providing the information they needed to act with agility in today's competitive retail market. Yet their ability to track sales daily was essential to ensure continued company growth. With such information, they could steer buyers towards more popular items and promptly reorder items that were selling well.

Boscov's solution was to create a data warehouse based on IBM DB2 Universal Database for

z/OS. To provide buyers with mission-critical business intelligence on sales performance, Boscov's is utilizing IBM DB2 OLAP Server on an IBM eServer pSeries 650. And to optimize performance of the data warehouse and the queries that buyers depend on to make important business decisions, Boscov's also implemented a comprehensive set of IBM DB2 Tools, including IBM DB2 Administration Tool for z/OS, IBM DB2 Query Monitor for z/OS, IBM DB2 SQL Performance Analyzer for z/OS and IBM DB2 Object Comparison for z/OS.

"Our DB2 Tools automatically do a job that saves time and money for the data center and gives end users better performance. In large part, our success has been a result of leveraging DB2 Tools to keep database performance high regardless of any changes in data structures."

–Kevin Eberhart

"Having a new data warehouse which we can query with DB2 OLAP Server and optimize with leading-edge IBM DB2 Tools allows our merchandise buying community to make more informed business decisions," says Kevin Eberhart, director of database administration, Boscov's. "By providing employees with up-to-date sales and inventory figures, for example, we have improved the efficiency of our merchandising operations, which positively impacts the company's bottom line."

Trusting IBM for leading-edge enterprise systems

Since 1988, Boscov's has used and trusted IBM mainframe systems and IBM transactional and information management systems such as IBM IMS^(tm), IBM CICS[®] and DB2 Universal Database. Again looking to IBM for thought-leadership on managing its burgeoning IT infrastructure, Boscov's also consolidated its server farm onto IBM eServer zSeries 900 Linux virtual servers. Its main product database, DB2 Universal Database for z/OS, manages information on 700,000 items.

"Between seasonal buying and selling, the data warehouse is used heavily all year, so the speed and scalability of DB2 provide us with a key competitive advantage," according to Eberhart. "We also appreciate the stored procedures and online reorganization features, which save enormous amounts of time by helping us avoid programming repeated functions. And, of course, the availability of DB2 on the mainframe is rock solid. There is no downtime except for scheduled maintenance."

Finding value in data assets

By implementing a DB2 data warehouse with DB2 OLAP Server, Boscov's is able to derive additional value from its product database and the networked point-of-sales systems in all of its stores. COBOL programming on the zSeries creates summaries from the data warehouse nightly and sends them to online analytical processing (OLAP) cubes on the pSeries system. Boscov's uses Hyperion Analyzer from IBM Business Partner Hyperion Solutions Corporation to enable users to query the OLAP cubes from Microsoft[®] Windows[®] desktops.

"Now we can provide our buyers with detailed business and sales analysis figures on a daily basis," says Eberhart. "They can find out how individual products are selling and what items are readily available, then use this information to respond rapidly to market opportunities. DB2 OLAP Server has made a solid impact on our overall revenue figures and workplace productivity."

DB2 Tools family of products optimizes performance

With so many users directing queries at the database, the company's IT department needed a cost-effective mechanism to maintain a reliable operating environment. Instead of expanding its database administration staff to monitor its business computing system, Boscov's implemented a selection of DB2 Tools.

Boscov's uses DB2 Administration Tool for z/OS to ensure optimal performance of its data

warehouse and save time in managing database structure changes in the production environment. The tool automatically drills down to levels impacted by the change and adjusts them accordingly. DB2 Query Monitor monitors the production environment and finds areas that could be problematic due to specific queries, then automatically notifies the database administration staff.

"We would need another DBA to perform system monitoring and maintenance tasks if we didn't have DB2 Administration Tool," says Eberhart. "Plus, DB2 Query Monitor helps us increase productivity and reduce operating costs by avoiding potential problems in our computing environment before they occur."

Integrating its DB2 Tools has provided the company with further performance enhancements. Boscov's IT staff simply cuts and pastes information from DB2 Query Monitor into DB2 SQL Performance Analyzer to engineer queries for better performance and analyze problems due to structured query language. Staff members can also use the system to analyze cost and time requirements for queries prior to executing them. The staff uses DB2 Object Comparison Tool to make sure that its test and production environments are running in parallel, thereby ensuring maximum system availability.

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The ultimate measure of success for a new IT system stems from users discovering new methods to increase productivity. For Boscov's, its DB2 solution has been a clear winner. Concludes Eberhart, "Our users approach us every day asking for different ways to slice and dice the data, so they can make better business decisions. IBM has enabled us to be more responsive to our users, and they in turn are responding to market opportunities with powerful ideas for keeping an upward momentum in merchandising performance."

For more information

Please contact your IBM marketing representative, IBM Business Partner or IBM Direct at: 1 800 IBM-CALL.

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For more information about Boscov's Department Stores, visit:
www.boscovs.com

[G-225-4300-00]

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