



IBM Customer Reference

Things Remembered

Location:

Twinsburg, Ohio USA

Industry: Retail

Focus Area: On Demand Business

Annual Revenue: \$5-20M

Employees/Students: 1000-4999

Geography: NA

Project Start: 08/2002

Project End: 10/2002

URL: <http://www.thingsremembered.com/>

Solution Synopsis:

IBM Web services provides the foundation for retail company's realtime online ordering process, improving customer satisfaction

Date Published: 11/01/2002

Last Updated: 06/02/2004

Customer Background: For Things Remembered, personalization is the remedy for mass production. Based in Highland Heights, Ohio, the company is the largest personalized gift chain in the U.S. By engraving pens, clocks, jewelry, picture frames and other gift items with personal messages, Things Remembered creates unique memorabilia of treasured relationships and occasions, such as weddings, birthdays and graduations. In addition to 800 stores nationwide, mail order catalogs and a toll-free call-in center, its online store serves as a critical channel for the company.

Business Need: The customer's online order submission process was insufficient to meet the needs of business partners and customers. Order requests were staged on partner Web sites and retrieved by Things Remembered servers only once a day. As a result, in some cases, the business partner and sometimes the end customer would not be notified of product availability until 24 hours or more after the order was placed. This inability to provide realtime information damaged customer satisfaction and caused lost sales. The company realized that the daily batch processing had to be replaced with a Web service capable of accepting and processing orders in realtime.

Solution Things Remembered chose to work with IBM because of

Implementation: ongoing success with its current WebSphere based e-commerce solution. When the company was faced with the decision to extend the services via a business-to-business (B2B) interface, it turned to IBM for an industry standards-based Web services solution.

The solution will allow the company's partners to transmit purchase order requests to www.thingsremembered.com via a SOAP message through the Internet. When the partner is ready to submit an order, it invokes a proxy provided by Things Remembered. The proxy validates all the required input parameters and constructs a well formed cXML order request. The proxy then serializes all the data into a SOAP message, which is digitally signed and sent to Things Remembered for processing. The implementation uses a security token in the SOAP message that conforms to the newly proposed Web services security standard. In addition to the WSDL file that describes the interface, Java, .Net, and COM proxies were developed to make it easy for Things Remembered partners to invoke the Order Request web service.

When complete, the solution will be deployed on WebSphere running on an IBM eServer iSeries platform. The new Web services solution and the clients/proxies were jointly developed by Things Remembered's staff and the IBM Advanced Technology Solutions group. In addition to the base Web services support provided by WebSphere, early implementations of the Apache Axis SOAP engine and IBM Web services security suite were used in this solution.

Benefits of the Solution: Although it is too early to measure the benefits, Things Remembered expects to improve customer satisfaction and reduce lost sales through the new solution. Web services technology was chosen in order to maximize the number of partner Web sites from which the company can accept orders. The use of industry standards like SOAP will enable Things Remembered to interact with any company, regardless of platform, operating system and language used.

Customer Quote: "The IBM jStart and ATS groups really gave us confidence that the new Web services technologies were mature enough for us to use and helped us build this application in a little over a month. This new Web services approach will provide a significant improvement in the way Things Remembered processes orders from our partners." --Mark Fodor, Director of e-business, Cole National (parent company of Things Remembered)

Software: Web Services: Web Services
WebSphere: WebSphere Application Server - Network Deployment, WebSphere MQ
Rational software: WebSphere Studio Application Developer

Contact Info for this Reference: Samuel A. (Sam) Thompson
IBM jStart Program -- Engagement Leader
IBM Div 61
USA
Phone: 1-919-254-5920
Fax: 1-916-237-4587
Tie Line: 444-5920
Sam Thompson/Raleigh/IBM@IBMUS
thompsam@us.ibm.com

Additional Reference Details

IBM revenue from this solution: US\$40 thousand

Competition: There were no competitors for this sale. The customer wanted to deploy the solution on its existing iSeries server and it made sense to approach IBM for the rest of the solution.

Competitive winback: No

Sales approach: The account team recognized that Web services technology could be used to help solve the customer's objectives and brought in the IBM jStart team for Web services to help the customer build the solution.

Lessons learned: Get the right skilled resources involved in the project from day one in order to ensure the customer's success.

Reference type: The following reference uses are ones which the customer was willing to do at the time of publication. This may or may not reflect the current situation.

Reference in IBM Proposal, Reference in IBM Speech or Presentation, Customer Success Story/Case Study

Existing collateral: There is a write-up on the IBM jStart Web site: <http://www-3.ibm.com/software/ebusiness/jstart/casestudies/webservices.html>

It is also attached to this reference.

Did the customer use IBM Global Financing? No

Attached files:



[- ATTOV73P](#)



[- wsthingsremembered.PRZ](#)

Other Hardware used in this solution: iSeries

Other Software used in this solution: OS/400, Windows 2000

Web Services Details: **Please indicate if this solution is in production or still being implemented:**
In production