



# Specialty Grocer Presents “Good Things to Eat” on the Internet

“Good Things to Eat” was the slogan adopted by Louis Wolferman in 1898 when he opened his corner grocery store in Kansas City. But it’s not just in Kansas anymore. Benefiting from the expertise of IBM Business Partner Cephias, Inc., Wolferman’s now operates as a global e-business, offering a wide array of signature goods through its customized Web site. Wolferman’s new online catalog service supplies a speedy and security-rich solution, allowing shoppers to have orders shipped anywhere on United States soil.

*“We’ve been really pleased with relationships between Cephias, IBM, and Wolferman’s. IBM has been a very good business partner in terms of helping us select Cephias and providing Net.Commerce and the tools to get this site up and running very quickly.”*

—Mike Ruchensky  
Internet Service Manager at Wolferman’s

“The great thing about the site is that 95 percent of the orders we have received have been from new customers,” says Mike Ruchensky, Internet service manager for Wolferman’s. “We have been able to reach a whole new set of people.”

### Beating the Holiday Rush

Wolferman’s has enjoyed success through brisk catalog sales since the company moved exclusively to mail order in 1987. Recognizing the changing face of technology, the company identified the growing e-business market as a practical way to find new customers and assist loyal catalog shoppers more efficiently. Since the Web site’s inception, Wolferman’s has seen a 5 percent increase in overall sales.

To take advantage of the holiday season, Wolferman’s goal was to have the site up and running before December. Cephias launched the Web site in October 1997 and had it completely functional by mid-November. With only three weeks until the deadline, the site registered 500 new customers — 100 of

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**Application** Online catalog with secure credit card transaction

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**Business Benefits** 95 percent of online orders are from new customers; 5 percent increase in sales since the Web site’s inception; established international presence

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**Software** IBM® Net.Commerce  
IBM Net.Data™  
IBM DB2®

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**Hardware** IBM AS/400®

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these were overseas orders to be shipped within the U.S. With its service growing in popularity, Ruchensky predicts around 500,000 packages will be shipped to individuals and businesses for the next holiday season, with 15,000 of those coming from online orders.



Wolferman’s is using e-commerce to reach international online shoppers.

## From the 'Net to Your Door

The essential task was to create a Web site that graphically resembled the print catalog and provided secure purchase transactions, while preserving the ease of shopping common to catalog purchasing. With Net.Commerce's customizing features, Cephas was able to engineer the solution to manage Wolferman's complex ordering requirements. As a result, customers can purchase multiple items and have them shipped to any number of people, in any number of places, at any time, using any shipping method.

"Ordering is a little quicker over the Web than it is over the telephone," Ruchensky explains. "If you place an order on the site today, you should have your products within a week. Mail order tends to take up to ten days."

As an added bonus, shoppers can use the site's handy Gift Finder, a service that helps customers narrow searches according to price range, gift theme, or a specific product. Customers can also select the Baker's Choice Club, which assures delivery of the distinctive Wolferman's treats to that special someone every month, every other month, or on a seasonal basis.

"The Web is a new marketing channel for us," says Ruchensky. "It lets us have more direct one-on-one interaction with our customers. We've gotten some great feedback from a number of long-time Wolferman's customers who have contacted us via e-mail."

## Net.Commerce — The Basic Ingredient

Customization and integration were two of Wolferman's key requirements. "Wolferman's needed a solution by which they could get a fully functional catalog with an integrated back-end interface, shopping cart capabilities, customer registration capabilities, integration capabilities with APIs and scripting, and they obviously needed it very quickly," explains Kurt Seybold of Cephas, Inc. "Net.Commerce comes with all those capabilities built in, keeping customer costs down because we customize the package to their needs."

Net.Commerce in conjunction with Net.Data pulls the information from the DB2 back end, creating the customized Net.Commerce order forms for Wolferman's online shoppers. The orders are then transferred from the Web to an AS/400 server with no human intervention. Credit card transactions are securely handled through the uniquely tailored CyberCash interface, equipped with SSL and VeriSign's digital ID authentication.

While DB2 stores the data records, Net.Commerce is able to calculate all charges while keeping track of ordering and shipping items. Moreover, it allows for verification of exporting restrictions and validation of payment information. Most important to Wolferman's, however, is that Net.Commerce provides the scalability to customize e-commerce applications so that inventory and "store displays" can be easily updated and expanded right along with the business.

## Nothing But the Best

With one holiday season under its belt and another on the way, plans are already in the making for the upcoming sales blitz. Extending its basic bakery item line-up, Wolferman's is now working on incorporating more gourmet food items into their product line under consultation from Chicago chef Charlie Trotter and Europe's popular Jacquemotte Coffees.

Meanwhile, Cephas, who continues to host the site, is working on moving to a newer version of Net.Commerce to further enhance the back- and front-end services. Upcoming Web site enhancements include a streamlined ordering process, discount incentive programs, and even a special occasions reminder service for customers. More reporting features will help ensure management can better respond to product trends and needs. It all comes back to Wolferman's promise of delivering exceptional food experiences to their valued patrons.

"We've been really pleased with relationships between Cephas, IBM, and Wolferman's," Ruchensky concludes. "IBM has been a very good business partner in terms of helping us select Cephas and providing Net.Commerce and the tools to get this site up and running very quickly."

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