

BuyUSA boosts export trade with WebSphere Commerce Suite.

Overview

■ **Application**

Online global B2B e-marketplace bringing small and medium-size U.S. sellers together with foreign buyers

■ **Business Benefits**

Projected 100% increase in the number of small to medium-size U.S. companies in exporting business within 3 years; greater speed and convenience in finding international business partners and executing transactions

■ **Software**

IBM WebSphere® Commerce Suite; IBM WebSphere Application Server, Advanced Edition; IBM DB2® Universal Database™; IBM Net.Data®; IBM Network Dispatcher; Lotus® Notes®

■ **Servers**

IBM RS/6000®

■ **Services**

IBM Global Services; IBM Managed e-business Services

■ **Business Partner**

IB Net



Exporting can be easier with BuyUSA and the e-marketplace technology created with IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite.

Export growth has been a consistent goal for U.S. policy makers for many years, and it's easy to see why. Every \$1 billion in export trade creates 13,000 jobs in the domestic economy, and they typically pay from 20 percent to 34 percent higher than non-exporting jobs. The problem is that the vast majority of U.S. firms are small and medium-size companies which don't have the resources to devote to the time-consuming and expensive process of setting up business partnerships abroad.

“IBM demonstrated a vision very much in line with what we wanted to do. . . . And IBM had the capability and the desire to deliver a total e-commerce solution to help us realize our vision.”

– Jerry Mitchell, Deputy Director General, U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service

e-business—accelerating the pace of business and the pace of change



By increasing the flow of U.S. goods to foreign buyers, BuyUSA.com expects to stimulate domestic job growth and enhance U.S. communities.

Enter the U.S. Department of Commerce's U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service (US&FCS), which has a mission to make export trade easier for small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs). With its network of 1,700 employees worldwide, 105 U.S. offices and 157 foreign offices in 85 countries, the US&FCS provides information, guidance and matchmaking services to U.S. firms with goods to export but no foreign buyers. Its employees are experienced trade professionals who have extensive contacts with business and government officials in foreign countries and can help U.S. companies find partners abroad who are interested in buying or distributing their products.

The process usually begins with trade specialist counseling sessions in the U.S. to help prepare the U.S. exporter for the export process or to understand new foreign markets. Then, if the U.S. firm wants to do business in Korea, for example, a trade specialist in Korea takes over and helps in the process of winnowing down potential leads to a final selection and a meeting on the ground. If everything works out well, deals follow.

The export process is complicated, and the one-on-one counseling from the US&FCS trade specialists is invaluable in helping companies through that process. But with the advent of Internet technology and especially e-marketplaces, the US&FCS knew that some of these processes could be enhanced using technology.

“The IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite solution makes it simple and quick for companies to find trading partners and easy for us to offer these services online.”

—Jerry Mitchell

"Our clients told us they wanted to be able to do export transactions at one Web site. E-marketplace technology is becoming increasingly popular and we felt we had to move in this direction to meet the needs of our clients," says Jerry Mitchell, deputy director general at the US&FCS.

To do this, the US&FCS needed a technology partner to provide an integrated, end-to-end B2B solution. The agency published an RFP in the Federal Register and contacted several technology vendors, presenting its stringent requirements for those up to the challenge.

Twelve companies replied, and the choice was quickly narrowed down to Accenture, ProNetLink and IBM. After intensive evaluations, the US&FCS was convinced that IBM was the company with the commitment and breadth of resources to provide a total solution. The US&FCS chose IBM and IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite.

Says Mitchell, "IBM demonstrated a vision very much in line with what we wanted to do. Its name in the industry lent credibility to what we were doing. And IBM had the capability and the desire to deliver a total e-commerce solution to help us realize our vision."

IBM Global Services created the solution, BuyUSA.com, which will enable U.S. companies to post product catalogs and foreign companies to find U.S. sellers. In addition to WebSphere Commerce Suite, IBM Global Services also leveraged its Business Innovation Services consultants, IBM Net.Data, IBM WebSphere Application Server, Advanced Edition and IBM DB2 Universal Database.

The robust search engine and customized catalog building tools that IBM developed for Tradelert, the global trading site of IBM Business Partner IB Net, were utilized to provide value-added functionality to BuyUSA.com.

Comments Mitchell, "Just doubling the number of U.S. companies exporting goods abroad from one percent to two percent of all companies can drive billions of dollars into the U.S. economy. Achieving results on this scale is within our reach because BuyUSA.com can

make exporters of thousands of companies which are ready to export, but have found it too difficult. The IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite solution makes it simple and quick for companies to find trading partners and easy for us to offer these services online."

Export storefront in 20 minutes

For fees ranging from \$300 to \$875, U.S. sellers can get listed on BuyUSA.com. WebSphere Commerce Suite offers an intuitive graphical interface and simple self-provisioning tools enabling companies to log on and build their own catalogs or product offering lists in as few as 20 minutes.

Foreign buyers with specific needs can log on, register and search for products using key words or the international Harmonized Systems code for the product. Plus, using the functionality of IBM Net.Data, buyers can create a search agent that continues to seek products after the session, e-mailing the customer when it finds what they want.

Click-and-mortar integration enhances in-country support

In addition to buying and selling services, BuyUSA.com enables exporters to take advantage of the expertise of brick-and-mortar trade specialist offices in 85 countries and across the U.S., reducing the time it takes to match a potential buyer with a U.S. supplier. Every time a new foreign buyer registers on the site, the buyer's information is automatically sent to the Department of Commerce's Client Management System, a communications network based on Lotus Notes used by all of the department's worldwide employees.

The new buyer appears on a list that each trade specialist accesses daily from the Client Management System. The specialist must then qualify the company, ensuring a bona fide inquiry. The buyer is electronically matched to U.S. suppliers and the trade specialist can then use this information to set up further discussions with the buyer to facilitate a partnership. In this way, BuyUSA.com offers a complete, integrated solution that helps all of its experts worldwide build relationships with global trading partners quickly and easily.

Scalable and robust global marketplace

To ensure that BuyUSA.com could provide fast transactions for hundreds of thousands of potential buyers worldwide, IBM Global Services created a reliable, scalable solution offering redundant server capacity and load balancing using IBM Network Dispatcher. The WebSphere Commerce Suite components run on two IBM RS/6000 servers. IBM DB2 Universal Database resides on two additional RS/6000 servers, one of which is a hot standby. To scale up, IBM can increase the number of processors in each server from two to four and then, if necessary, add additional racks of servers. IBM Managed e-business Services hosts the solution at the IBM Universal Server Farm in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Hits from the Internet come through Network Dispatcher and Apache to WebSphere Application Server. For catalog requests, WebSphere Application Server hands the request over to WebSphere Commerce Suite, which retrieves seller catalog data managed by DB2 Universal Database.

For the next release, the US&FCS and IBM plan to extend the site with access to export service providers who specialize in trade financing, taxation and logistics. Comments Mitchell, "Our integrated IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite solution is built to last and it's going to be great news for the U.S. economy."

For more information

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