



Shoppers go to Gowings anytime, anywhere with Net.Commerce.

While many apparel retailers boast of impeccable taste and distinction, few can claim that their names have become part of the national idiom. But when Australians say "gone to Gowings," they – knowingly or not – are paying homage to the popular Sydney-based menswear

retailer, which recently celebrated its 130th year in business, with annual sales of nearly AU\$30 million (US\$19.2 million).

Gowings Bros. Ltd. (Gowings) estimates that 500,000 customers visit its 3 Sydney stores each year. Since many of these customers are tourists and Australians from out of town, Gowings reasoned that it could boost repeat sales if it could extend its presence to these customers' local markets. But since it operated in a relatively small market niche, the retailer couldn't justify the cost of opening numerous brick-and-mortar stores throughout the world.

"We started off on a small scale, but within ten years we expect to do as much business over the Internet as in all our physical locations combined. With the Net.Commerce solution, we are well positioned to support that growth."

– John Gowing, Managing Director, Gowings Bros. Ltd

Application	Online menswear retail store
Business Benefits	Potential for global presence without investing in physical stores; Web sales expected to eclipse total in-store sales in ten years; increased repeat sales; expected 800% growth in customer database for direct mail
Software	IBM® Net.Commerce IBM DB2® for Windows NT® IBM eNetwork™ Firewall IBM HTTP Server



Gowings goes global with an online menswear retail store.



Instead, it turned to e-business. Working with IBM BESTeam® Business Partner OzEcommerce, Gowings has created an online store (www.gowings.com.au) powered by IBM Net.Commerce and supported by IBM DB2 and IBM eNetwork Firewall. Now the retailer can open its doors to customers anytime, anywhere in the world with minimal overhead costs.

Although the site is still in its infancy, Gowings is banking on the increasing popularity of the Internet worldwide, especially among affluent young men, to contribute to growing profitability of this "e-tail" (electronic retail) channel. "We started off on a small scale, but within ten years we expect to do as much business over the Internet as in all our physical locations combined," says Managing Director John Gowing. "With the Net.Commerce solution, we are well positioned to support that growth."

A shopping site for the discerning non-shopper

Gowings' initial objective for the Web site was to boost repeat sales of its 100 most popular items. "Most men don't like to shop," explains Gowings Chief Operating Officer Michael Alscher. "The real opportunity for us was to build a Web site where men can get in, buy their five oxford shirts and five pairs of boxers and get out quickly."

That meant ensuring easy navigation through the site, fast system response and flexible ordering options. Bringing to bear its 28 years in the apparel and textile industries, OzEcommerce worked closely with Gowing and Alscher to design a site that, while conveying the feeling of shopping at a real Gowings store, would also enable e-commerce novices to browse and buy on the Internet with ease and confidence.

After evaluating other merchant server software, OzEcommerce opted for the more flexible and complete solution offered by Net.Commerce. The Net.Commerce storefront provides all the online functionality Gowings needed, including a searchable catalog, shopping cart, check-out

and shipping options. The support in Net.Commerce for industry-standard Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption protects the privacy of customer credit card information as it traverses the Internet.

All the online catalog information, as well as the orders and the customer registry, are stored in a DB2 database. That database, along with the Net.Commerce software and IBM HTTP Server powered by Apache resides on a Microsoft® Windows NT server. IBM eNetwork Firewall software helps preserve the integrity of the data on the server by preventing unauthorized access.

To make it easy for customers to start browsing the online store as soon as they reach the home page, Gowings does not require its online shoppers to register until they are ready to check out. However, the information customers do provide when they place an order helps Gowings expand its customer database, which it uses to build its direct mail business. "We currently have 60,000 names in our customer database," Gowing says. "With the global reach of the online store, we expect to grow that database by more than 800 percent to well over 500,000 within the next couple of years."

The next link in the supply chain

Although Gowings felt it needed to get in early on the e-business revolution, it didn't want to rush in headlong either, as Alscher explains: "Given that Internet retailing is still rather uncharted territory, we didn't want to risk our reputation with fly-by-night e-business technology vendors. We had to feel comfortable that the vendor would deliver what we wanted, at a cost that would make this whole project viable. IBM gave us that comfort right from the beginning."

Gowings next task is to integrate the online store with its inventory and fulfillment systems. That will enable a completely automated ordering process, from the customer's Web browser, to Gowings' network to its suppliers' warehouses. Gowings is still evaluating specific strategies for back-end integration, but Alscher notes, "IBM technology will certainly be the cornerstone of it."

For more information please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner.

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