

## Swets Blackwell subscribes to IBM Web self-service solution.

### Overview

#### ■ Challenge

Improve customer service and satisfaction by complementing existing offline services with online information delivery solutions and streamlined business processes

#### ■ Solution

Web self-service platform for on demand online content delivery and subscription management

#### ■ Why IBM?

Only IBM had the necessary familiarity with Swets Blackwell's IBM infrastructure and the technological superiority, market presence and Business Partner base to deliver the solution that the company required

#### ■ Key Benefits

For Swets Blackwell's customers: Significant time and cost savings for subscription management and research. For Swets Blackwell: Higher revenues and lower costs due to heightened customer satisfaction and increased customer base; considerable savings by leveraging rather than replacing legacy infrastructure; back-office administrative workload reduced significantly, enabling the company to invest more resources in its core competencies

The screenshot shows the SwetsWise user interface. At the top, there are navigation links for 'subscriptions search & order manage & claim approve', 'online content articles publications publishers', 'preferences my profile alerts favorites', and 'administration account users'. Below this is a 'SwetsWise User' overview section with a grid of widgets:

- search & order**: Includes a search bar, 'advanced search', 'browse catalog', and a 'search' button.
- shopping cart**: Shows 5 item(s).
- current subscriptions**: 212 subscriptions, 5 to be renewed.
- subscription requests**: 3 requests pending.
- claims**: 2 requests pending.
- approvals**: 6 approval(s) pending.
- filing cabinet**: 25 filed articles.
- TOC alerts**: 8 alerts used, 10 alerts allowed.
- search alerts**: 4 alerts used, 5 alerts allowed.
- user favorites**: 28 favorites.
- department favorites**: 21 favorites.
- newly added users**: 6 newly added users.

Swets Blackwell's employees in 22 countries serve more than 60,000 information centers worldwide, including nearly one-third of Fortune 500 companies.

For an environmentalist seeking the latest legal rulings on noise pollution, or a graduate student needing clinical findings to support her thesis, a library's periodicals section is the perfect resource. But researchers are often frustrated by the difficulties of searching those treasure-troves for specific information. And the libraries themselves are chronically burdened with evaluating and selecting publications and managing ongoing business issues with thousands of publishers.

For over a century, information agent Swets Blackwell (Swets) has been addressing and resolving these challenges with remarkable success.

*“Swets needed to create a new online service that would allow customers to easily order and manage information in realtime. We wanted to deliver information as quickly as possible while opening up new markets for our services.”*

*– Arjen Oudheusden, Marketing Director, Swets Blackwell*

## Anticipating and responding to customer and market demands in realtime

### Key Components

#### Software

- IBM WebSphere® Application Server Enterprise Edition, Version 3.5
- IBM WebSphere Commerce
- IBM WebSphere MQ
- IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for AIX®, Version 7.1
- IBM Tivoli® Storage Manager, Version 4.2

#### Servers

- IBM @server pSeries™ 640 and 660
- IBM @server zSeries®
- IBM UNIX® processor-based servers

#### Services

- IBM Global Services

#### Business Partner

- Actuate
- Verity

Headquartered in Lisse, the Netherlands, Swets ([www.swetsblackwell.com](http://www.swetsblackwell.com)) is the world leader in selling published scientific and professional information, with more than \$1 billion in annual sales to approximately 60,000 libraries and corporate research centers worldwide. Its mission is to ease the burden on these institutions by centrally offering and managing subscriptions to a variety of traditional and electronic serials—and by providing researchers a vast selection of online publications and related licensing information, linked by powerful information management tools. The company employs a staff of more than 1,000 worldwide.

Swets recently found itself at a crossroads, however, as its marketing director, Arjen Oudheusden, recalls. “Swets had a strong customer base in the academic market, comprised of libraries in universities, government institutions and R&D-driven pharmaceutical companies,” he notes. “The real test for Swets was to break into the corporate market, where we saw great possibilities to grow our business.

“Swets needed to create a new online service that would allow customers to easily order and manage information in realtime. We wanted to deliver the information each customer required as quickly as possible, while at the same time opening up new markets for our services. Since many corporations lacked libraries or research centers, they were ill-equipped to manage companywide subscriptions. We therefore felt that the corporate market was ripe for an online service.”

### Transforming the enterprise

Swets had to act quickly—to keep its customers happy, attract new ones and protect its competitive position. “What had grown up over time was a set of unconnected processes—some for subscription management, some for information and content—and none were compatible,” Oudheusden explains. “To solve the problem, we needed to create an overall process that would be highly responsive to our customers and make it easy to deliver the information each customer required at the correct time, which was generally immediately.”

Transforming its existing cumbersome process would give users the ability to manage their accounts themselves, rather than waiting for answers. “We had a vision of a single, automated system that would allow authorized users to manage their own subscriptions in realtime or to access and read any of millions of articles on demand—no matter where the articles were physically located,” says Oudheusden. “This would not only save significant time and costs for our users, it would allow us to flexibly manage our pricing structures, with a direct impact to the bottom line.”

Finally, replacing multiple incompatible and awkward processes with a single streamlined process would allow Swets to eliminate costly, labor-intensive back-office functions. “The combination of improving our responsiveness to customers and our competitive position—and the opportunity to reduce costs—created a compelling business case. We decided to go ahead.”

*“We have always stayed attuned to our customers’ needs and responded to them quickly. IBM’s strategic vision supports that capability. With IBM on our side, our second century will be even more successful than our first.”*

—Arjen Oudheusden

An IBM customer since 1976, Swets asked IBM Global Services to help orchestrate this business transformation by developing and deploying an automated solution for online content delivery and subscription management. The solution would need to deliver powerful subscription management functionality, enabling a customer's authorized staff to search a customized catalog for pricing and selections; activate, renew or cancel subscriptions on demand; and initiate a fully automated approval and payment cycle with support for credit cards and e-billing. Additionally, from the same self-service interface, it would need to provide researchers with comprehensive, realtime access to relevant, usable information from millions of sources.

"Our idea was to use the power of Web self-service technology to enhance and streamline our customer service, while continuing to leverage our legacy computing infrastructure," Oudheusden explains. Based on this input, IBM designed and implemented SwetsWise ([www.swetwise.com](http://www.swetwise.com))—a Web self-service platform that meets customers' subscription management requirements as well as their end clients' need for highly usable online information.

Powered by WebSphere software from IBM, IBM DB2 Universal Database, IBM Tivoli Storage Manager and IBM **@server** pSeries 640 and 660 systems as well as IBM UNIX processor-based servers, SwetsWise integrates seamlessly with the company's legacy IBM **@server** zSeries line-of-business system. Components from IBM Business Partners Verity and Actuate provide additional functionality.

From the outset, Oudheusden says, the company's quest for a solution pointed to IBM. "Not only was IBM familiar with our technical environment, but it also had the proven expertise to deliver a Web solution based on open, scalable technologies," he says. "IBM was the only vendor whose global presence could support our international business. And IBM had strong, collaborative connections with a network of Business Partners offering products, services and know-how to complement our application."

### **Two functional modules, one Web-based platform**

SwetsWise consists of two modules—SwetsWise subscriptions and SwetsWise online content—within a single Web-based platform. Customers access the system in a secure manner, through a Web browser or—for the subscription management module—using e-procurement systems from vendors such as Ariba, SAP or CommerceOne.

With the subscriptions module, authorized staff can instantly access pricing, manage subscriptions or administer approval and payment. "Information managers no longer waste time holding on the phone or filling out change request forms," Oudheusden notes. "And by supporting contract-based rates for our key accounts, it permits us to flexibly manage our pricing structures and maximize our profitability."

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### **On Demand Business Benefits**

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- Heightened responsiveness to customers' needs has boosted satisfaction and increased revenues
- Support for variable contract-based pricing has improved profitability
- Reduction in back-office workload enables customer to invest more resources in core competencies

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### **Technology Benefits**

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- Subscription management and research costs cut, due to robust information management platform
  - Open standards enable considerable saving by leveraging rather than replacing legacy infrastructure
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Using the online content module, researchers can search and read any of more than 2.5 million text articles or order hard-copy documents from publishers—all with the certainty that they do not already have access to the article from any other electronic or printed source. Using sophisticated search tools as well as hyperlinks within the module's intuitively indexed table of contents, users can quickly find the information they seek. After locating the articles they need, they can click through to a publisher's Web site to access them. Says Oudheusden, "Researchers no longer need to perform multiple searches for information they can locate and download instantly from SwetsWise."

When a customer accesses either SwetsWise module, IBM WebSphere Application Server, residing on a pSeries server, provides the Web front end. The customer's subscription information and associated catalog items are stored in DB2 Universal Database, also on pSeries. Customers use IBM WebSphere Commerce as a storefront for both modules—managers can purchase subscriptions and researchers can pay for online information. IBM WebSphere MQ passes business information between the SwetsWise database and the company's line-of-business DB2 database, while IBM Tivoli Storage Manager provides backup and archive of sales and other subscriber account data. Verity K2 Catalog provides catalog search functionality, and Actuate e-Reporting serves as a reporting tool.

### **Adapting easily to change**

SwetsWise has revolutionized the way Swets does business. "By eliminating many of our labor-intensive processes, SwetsWise has enabled us to reduce our back-office workload significantly," Oudheusden says. "Now we can devote more resources to delivering the world's best information sources to our customers. And by leveraging our existing mainframe infrastructure, rather than replacing it, we have saved considerably."

No less impressive are the benefits SwetsWise brings to its customers. "Customers are cutting the time and cost of subscription management and reducing the time needed for locating and managing online content," says Oudheusden. "SwetsWise has boosted our customers' satisfaction, heightened our competitive advantage and increased our customer base. As a result, our revenues have increased and our costs have dropped."

According to Oudheusden, the secret to the company's longevity lies in its ability to adapt to business changes without losing its focus. "As the marketplace has evolved, we have always stayed attuned to our customers' needs and responded to them quickly," he notes. "IBM's strategic vision toward open, flexible technologies supports that capability. With IBM on our side, our second century will be even more successful than our first."

### **For more information**

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