

# Multichannel commerce with product information management for electronics

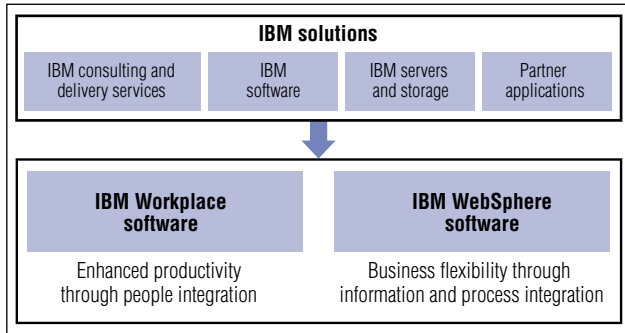


## Highlights

- Provide contextual customer interactions based on role, geographic location and customer type
- Deliver consistent product and brand information across direct sales channels and partner networks
- Deploy a single platform to support all interactions with direct customers and channel partners
- Implement real-time integration between commerce platform and back-end systems of record for orders, contracts, pricing and item availability — including SAP
- Centralize integration of structured and unstructured product information to help maximize the availability and accuracy of information

## Meet the challenges of your most diverse and demanding customers

In the face of today's volatile, hyper-competitive markets, electronics companies have no choice: they must find ways to meet the needs of all their customers — business customers, partners and consumers. If you're not responsive to their ever-changing needs, they'll take their business to one of your competitors.



*IBM software is a key building block of IBM solutions.*

In response, an electronics business must create differentiated experiences that drive revenues and customer loyalty, streamline key processes and reduce operating expenses. This may sound like a daunting task, but with the correct strategy and enabling technology, you can meet and exceed your customers' demands while achieving enhanced operational efficiency.

And yet, too often electronics businesses are saddled with fragmented and repetitive manual processes for managing marketing and sales processes, as well as for gathering and synchronizing product information across multiple channels. Without a

cohesive strategy enabled by an integrated solution built on a robust and flexible platform, electronics companies lose time that they simply cannot afford in the current business climate.

To help your business respond rapidly to changing market conditions and facilitate the introduction of new products, you can deploy the integrated IBM multichannel commerce with product information management. IBM multichannel commerce with product information management helps you manage various customer types across multiple channels while keeping product information accurate, available and timely.

### **Leverage the integrated IBM approach to solving electronics industry challenges**

IBM solutions for electronics bring together IBM's extensive portfolio of hardware, software and high-value services — and its wide network of partners — to address the most prevalent challenges for clients in the industry. IBM solutions and electronics industry experience help our clients accelerate their progress in becoming an On Demand Business — so they can respond with flexibility and speed to virtually any customer demand, market opportunity or external threat.

IBM Workplace™ and WebSphere® are key software building blocks of the IBM solutions for electronics. IBM Workplace helps transform the way businesses work — making people more productive by enabling them to make well-informed decisions and take targeted actions, rapidly. And IBM WebSphere delivers business flexibility through information and process integration, and IT infrastructure optimization.

IBM multichannel commerce with product information management is part of IBM WebSphere for Electronics Sales and Service. It enables you to maintain product integrity and manage customer interactions across multiple sales channels by helping you:

- Leverage accurate, timely product information — both structured and unstructured.
- Provide contextual customer interactions through direct and indirect channels, however, whenever and wherever customers choose.
- Enable tight, real-time integration with back-end, enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems.

#### **Coordinate product information across and beyond the enterprise**

Product information can be found in a dizzying number of places within and outside an electronics company. Internal sources include ERP, customer relationship management (CRM), supply chain management (SCM) and product data management (PDM) applications, as well as legacy applications. An increasing amount of product information frequently comes from vendors and business partners.

IBM multichannel commerce with product information management gives you the tools to coordinate product information across these sources:

- Simplify the management, creation, deletion and enhancement of product information — both by enabling business users to easily create new content and by automating data extraction and import for ongoing updates.
- Deploy a centralized, Web-based authoring environment to give business users a complete view of product information.
- Streamline workflows such as change tracking, review and approval.

When you use the IBM authoring environment for product content, your business users can assemble and approve current, accurate information once — then quickly publish it to your multiple channels. IBM enables you to coordinate online, print and in-store touch points, deliver consistent information to multiple product lines, and reach distributors and buyers.

To help you achieve these product information management goals — and, ultimately, support your commerce

initiatives — IBM multichannel commerce with product information management is enabled by products that include:

- IBM WebSphere Product Center — offers business users a single environment for preparing, maintaining and approving product information from within and outside the enterprise.
- Complementary software for unstructured content management — IBM WebSphere Information Integrator Content Edition leverages an open platform to integrate unstructured product information, and IBM DB2® Content Manager enables business users to store and retrieve unstructured content in a highly scalable manner from a single, standard back-end repository.

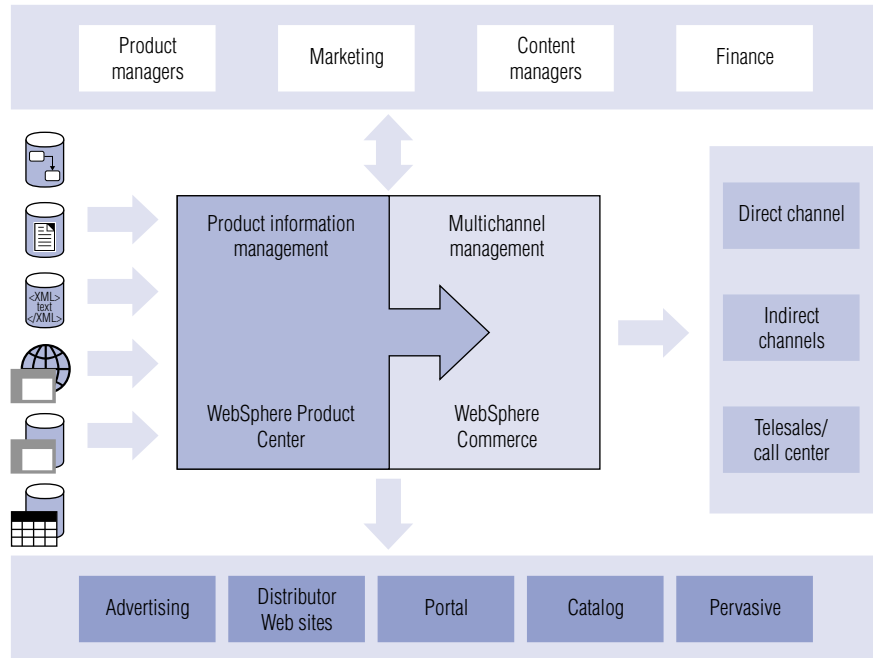
#### **Interact with customers in the context of your relationship**

Electronics companies serve many types of customers. Consumers and business customers buy direct. Partners distribute through indirect channels. An electronics company must be able to interact with its diverse set of customers in ways that are appropriate to each unique relationship.

But when an electronics company relies on manual processes to manage these distinct relationships, it runs the risk of providing the wrong experience to customers, which can create customer dissatisfaction, jeopardize relationships and result in substantial lost revenues. Furthermore, inefficient manual processes are themselves unnecessarily expensive.

In contrast, IBM multichannel commerce with product information management enables you to seamlessly integrate multiple channels to help deliver a consistent brand and customer experiences. As a result, you can strengthen relationships with consumers, business customers and partners.

IBM multichannel commerce with product information management helps you automate and streamline processes across marketing, ordering, selling and fulfilling — for both direct and indirect customers. For example, for your tier 1 customers — those who have purchasing agreements with



Architecture of IBM multichannel commerce with product information management

negotiated prices and specific terms and conditions — you can offer:

- Appropriate availability and contractual pricing information.
- Online access to all current and past orders — those placed through electronic document interchange (EDI), other business-to-business (B2B) channels and the Web site.
- Other relevant information, services and capabilities, based on what the customer is entitled to see and do.

For tier 2 customers who lack direct purchasing agreements with you but work with your distributors, you might:

- Provide only regionally available products or products that the distributor has in inventory.
- Omit item prices and inventory information.
- Automatically pass order details to the right distributors' order management and fulfillment systems.

In both cases, the single platform enables you to deliver the appropriate information to users while always drawing the latest information from your back-end application and information systems. IBM multichannel commerce with product information management helps you provide personalized information to both internal and external users in a highly secure fashion.

To support the close integration of multichannel commerce with product information management, IBM multichannel commerce with product information management includes the following enabling software:

- IBM WebSphere Commerce — deploy a scalable transaction environment to support all commerce activities, including catalog search, contract management, ordering and shipping for direct and indirect fulfillment models.
- IBM WebSphere Portal — customize customer interactions to support differentiated channel needs, including customer branding, catalog management and more.

### **Closely integrate with back-end systems**

Because electronics companies frequently store order, contract and pricing information in back-end systems such as those from SAP, IBM multichannel commerce with product information management integrates closely with these back-end systems. As a result, you can use it to reliably exchange information between your online commerce and back-end applications.

Integration features of IBM multichannel commerce with product information management include:

- Retrieval and transfer of comprehensive catalog data from back-end systems to the online commerce system.
- Tracking incoming requests from the online commerce server and associating them with the corresponding responses from the back-end server.
- Mapping of data between online commerce and back-end formats.

- High-reliability connections with online commerce and back-end servers.
- Detection, retrieval and updating of catalog updates and new items.

In addition, IBM Business Partners complement IBM multichannel commerce with product information management by providing industry-specific business applications that run on IBM platforms.

### **For more information**

When you want to adopt an integrated approach to leveraging product information across multiple channels in support of new revenue-generating products, turn to IBM. To learn more about the integrated IBM multichannel commerce with product information management — and other offerings for the electronics industry — call your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit [ibm.com/software/industries/electronics](http://ibm.com/software/industries/electronics)



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