e-business Solutions

AutoAccessory.com runs more efficiently with IBM e-business tune up.
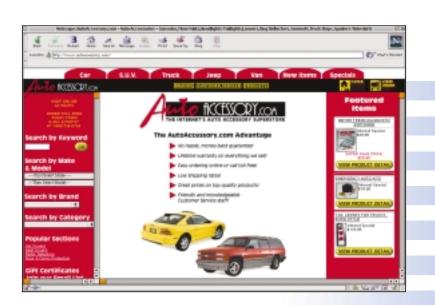
Application	B2C Web storefront reselling auto accessories
Business Benefits	100% ROI achieved in 7 months; up to 5.5 hours less data-entry time per staff member per day; 80% reduction in training expenses; 40% increase in revenue; improved customer satisfaction
Software	IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for Windows NT® IBM WebSphere® Commerce Suite IBM Net.Data® IBM HTTP Server
Servers	IBM Netfinity®
Business Partner	Cyberspace Promotions, Inc.

For many people, buying a new car is the ultimate expression of one's identity. And for those who want to truly show the world who they are, accessories like spoilers or running boards make all the difference. Finding just that right accessory to suit your taste can be tough — unless you're searching the electronic catalog of AutoAccessory.com, a Web storefront with thousands of items from multiple manufacturers.

Based in Irvine, California, with 35 employees, AutoAccessory.com had originally used an e-commerce software suite from ViaWeb to build a sizable online catalog of products. The reseller

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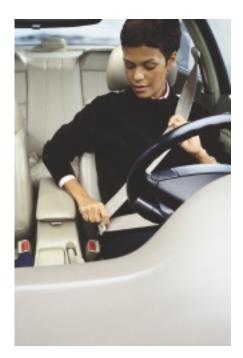
– Craig Smith, President, AutoAccessory.com

had also developed a network of co-marketing affiliates that re-branded and sold the products in AutoAccessory.com's database from their own Web stores. As AutoAccessory.com's Web site grew in popularity, however, its e-business

With an IBM engine under the hood, AutoAccessory.com delivers an enormous variety of car accessories quickly, easily and at great prices.

AutoAccessory.com has made pleasing customers its number one priority and has done so with tremendous success.

platform hampered the organization's efficiency and customer service. Updating the store catalog was a slow process because the system only permitted back-end access for one person at a time.

The process of listing products under multiple categories was also a cumbersome task — clerks were forced to re-enter product information for each category. This could take up to an entire day for one item. And AutoAccessory.com needed to list items for more than 250 vehicle makes and models — as well as special promotions and new items.

Finally, because its original ViaWeb database did not support data export, affiliate stores received their product updates either by cutting and pasting or by completely re-typing all of the information. As the catalog steadily grew, data-entry personnel couldn't refresh the back end fast enough, and customers were getting conflicting prices from different stores. And some available products were not being sold because they weren't listed on the Web.

With the holidays approaching, AutoAccessory.com was struggling to get the site ready for the busy shopping season. Craig Smith, president of AutoAccessory.com, sums up the situation, "We had so many things going on at once, and we were wasting a tremendous amount of time on data entry. And when customers started getting conflicting prices, we knew things were quickly becoming unmanageable."

AutoAccessory.com needed to decrease the time spent entering data and increase information availability with a solution that accommodated database access for multiple data-entry personnel and integration with its affiliate network.

Seeking development help from an e-business solution provider, AutoAccessory.com was introduced to IBM Premier Business Partner Cyberspace Promotions, Inc. "After noting everything that needed to be done for AutoAccessory.com, we knew that IBM's products would best fulfill all of the company's needs," says Brent Marcus, president of Cyberspace Promotions. "We were very familiar with IBM's products — having used

"DB2 is improving the efficiency of our network of stores and making our customers happier."

– Craig Smith

them extensively for other solutions—and we knew that the IBM Application Framework for e-business would give us a guide to build a more efficient and robust solution for AutoAccessory.com."

The new AutoAccessory.com Web site, running on an IBM Netfinity 5500 server, is powered by IBM WebSphere Commerce Suite, IBM Net.Data and IBM HTTP Server, with IBM DB2 Universal Database for Windows NT serving as the catalog database.

Within WebSphere Commerce Suite, there is an administrator module that provides data-entry personnel with multiple-user, login capabilities. This allows AutoAccessory.com to have many people simultaneously uploading information about thousands of products quickly and easily. And although any item can be linked to multiple product categories through WebSphere Commerce Suite, each item is entered into the DB2 database only once. "WebSphere Commerce Suite is saving our company up to 5.5 hours of data-entry time a day per staff member," explains Smith. And because DB2 Universal Database allows instant data export, affiliate stores can be quickly updated. "DB2 is improving the efficiency of our network of stores and making our customers happier," Smith adds.

AutoAccessory.com achieved a full ROI in just seven months and is now serving millions of page views a month. The IBM solution is also benefiting AutoAccessory.com by giving it the confidence to expand its affiliate network. "When we approach prospective partners, they are always comforted by the fact that we use IBM products," says Smith. The solution gave AutoAccessory.com tremendous support through its holiday rush. "We could have never achieved this performance through the holidays with our last implementation," explains Smith. "The IBM configuration performed flawlessly."

Customers get the details
Customers interested in dressing up their vehicles can search among the 11,000 products listed in the electronic catalog, which was created with WebSphere Commerce Suite. When a customer initiates a search, Net.Data issues an SQL statement that polls

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The IBM WebSphere software platform has made AutoAccessory.com a faster, more efficient organization.

DB2 Universal Database for the requested items and brings them back to the user's browser. Cyberspace Promotions also customized tables in DB2 to support an e-mail list, which notifies members of sales, first glimpses at new items and, most importantly for the consumer, discount codes for promotional items. When customers enter the codes into various areas of the catalog, WebSphere Commerce Suite instantly calculates the discounted price. Smith explains the success, "DB2 Universal Database and WebSphere Commerce Suite have fulfilled every marketing idea that I've been able to come up with."

IBM provides the tools for growth

AutoAccessory.com knew that the success of an e-commerce venture would depend on the customer's level of trust in the system. "It was very important to us that we go with a name that people would recognize and trust—IBM was that name," explains Smith. As a company that expects considerable growth, AutoAccessory.com also needed to consider the future when choosing a solution vendor. According to Smith, the other vendors did not offer the sense of security that a growing company needs. "We looked at other solutions, but too many of them were from companies that we never heard of," explains Smith. "We knew that IBM would be there down the road and give us the long-term support we need to grow."

AutoAccessory.com is now poised to expand its catalog of products to include automotive-related electronics. "This solution has made us much more efficient and gives us the ability to grow at any pace," explains Smith. "With our new IBM solution providing the support, we are becoming a much more profitable company."

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

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For more information about AutoAccessory.com, visit:
www.autoaccessory.com

For more information about Cyberspace Promotions, Inc., visit:
www.cspro.com

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