



Basic Vegetable Products reaps rewards of self-service extranet.

Application	CRM: food ingredient order management and informational site for food manufacturers
Business Benefits	100% ROI in 9 months; up to 40% reduction in administrative costs; 60% shorter development cycle; all major customers online; 3 week time-to-market
Software	IBM WebSphere® Application Server, Standard Edition IBM DB2® Universal Database™ for AS/400® IBM DB2 Universal Database for Windows NT® Lotus® Notes® Lotus Domino™
Hardware	IBM AS/400
Business Partner	UptimeOne

Headquartered in Walnut Creek, California, Basic Vegetable Products is one of the oldest and the leading vegetable ingredient companies in the world. Some of the most well known food companies—Nestle, Lipton and Campbell Soup—stake their reputations on a steady supply of high-quality ingredients from Basic.

These and other large first-tier customers represent 75 percent of Basic's revenues. Not surprisingly, the company is doing everything it can to increase their satisfaction. And that means keeping them informed. As John Dickey, vice president of Basic Vegetable Products,

explains, "Customers look to their delivery dates with great anticipation, making instant access to order status very important. Our biggest challenge was to find a way to supply our customers with information on order status and shipment location, all within seconds of their request."

"WebSphere Application Server really simplified the architecture for us."

– Mike Bertrand, Chief Technology Officer, UptimeOne



Basic Vegetable Products customers can get order updates within seconds thanks to the company's Java-based extranet.

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



Using IBM WebSphere Application Server, Basic gives its customers the information needed for wise purchases.

In the past, Basic handled customer inquiries by fax and through a call center. But not all of its global customer base could enjoy the full benefits of the call center, which operated during local business hours. In addition, it took up to 36 hours for the company to respond to individual inquiries by fax, at an estimated cost of \$90 to \$100 per contact.

Basic looked to the Internet to provide its first-tier customers with immediate, world-wide access to the information they needed. However, that information resided in myriad legacy information systems, including Prism and J.D. Edwards' enterprise resource planning (ERP) applications. To rewrite all of these as Web applications would have been cost-prohibitive and would have taken at least 6 months to accomplish.

Striving for a solution that would integrate seamlessly with its existing systems, Basic sought the advice of several Internet solution providers. The only provider able to meet the company's needs — without changing its back-end applications — was San Jose-based UptimeOne, an IBM Business Partner. Basic considered many options, but was most impressed with UptimeOne's expertise and cooperative nature.

Using its e-businessOne™ software suite, in conjunction with IBM WebSphere Application Server, Standard Edition and IBM DB2 Universal Database for Windows NT, UptimeOne launched a Java™ technology-based extranet within three weeks. Hosted by UptimeOne, the extranet provides each customer with personalized Web pages that include a customized product catalog, access to crop reports and product specification sheets and, most importantly, order status information. To provide the near-realtime updates, the extranet extracts order status data directly from Basic's back-end IBM AS/400 systems.

UptimeOne also leveraged Basic's previous investment in Lotus Domino and Lotus Notes to make it easy for Basic employees to post specification sheets, Kosher certificates, crop reports and other information on the extranet. For Basic's customers, the latest crop reports are key to deciding when they should order a particular item.

“Our key objective going into the e-business arena was to better serve customers with vital order information.

With UptimeOne's software, powered by IBM WebSphere Application Server, we have achieved that goal.”

*— John Dickey, Vice President,
Basic Vegetable Products*

All of Basic's first-tier customers use the extranet daily—a resounding demonstration of its value. “Our customers appreciate being able to securely access their orders and contact information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as well as the one-to-one personalization,” Dickey notes. “And our sales representatives love being able to focus more on selling than administration.”

Dickey reports that the extranet delivered a 100 percent return on investment (ROI) in just nine months. “To provide the same level of customer service without the extranet, we would have had to hire two to three additional staff members, increasing our overhead unacceptably,” he says.

An extranet with a personal touch

Basic's extranet uses the catalog and order management modules in UptimeOne's e-businessOne™ software suite, which runs in UptimeOne's hosted environment. UptimeOne provides a catalog Web page template, which Basic personalizes for each customer. The customized catalogs reduce the time customers spend searching for the products they need.

When a customer logs in through the Internet, Domino authenticates the user and brings up the personalized pages from the Web server. The product information behind each of the selections in the catalog is stored in Lotus Notes databases, which also reside on the same server.

For now, Basic prefers to have its sales representatives handle each order personally. So, when a customer selects products from the online catalog, instead of taking the order, the extranet notifies the appropriate sales representatives by e-mail. The representative then calls the customer to verify and complete the order, entering the information into a DB2 database in the company's back-end Prism and J.D. Edwards systems, which run on an AS/400 server.

“Our customers appreciate being able to securely access their orders and contact information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, as well as the one-to-one personalization.”

– John Dickey



IBM and UptimeOne's e-business solution provided Basic a 100 percent ROI within nine months.

JavaBeans deliver veggie stats

Once the order is entered, customers can log on to the extranet and request updated order status at any time. The order status request function — Java servlets running within WebSphere Application Server — invokes order status JavaBeans™ to retrieve the order information from DB2. WebSphere Application Server servlets use JavaServer Pages™ to display the information in HTML in the Web browser.

Mike Bertrand, UptimeOne's CTO says, "The WebSphere software platform provided us with a good Java application server environment in which we could deploy our software. It really simplified the architecture for us." For a future version of UptimeOne's application solutions provider (ASP) offering, UptimeOne is considering migrating to WebSphere Application Server, Advanced Edition to take advantage of its support for clustering and Enterprise JavaBeans.

As part of UptimeOne's food industry-specific offering, crop reports, specifications sheets and other information are stored in Lotus Notes databases on the Web server. To deliver the crop reports, employees at Basic use a Lotus Notes form to enter the information that the company receives by fax and e-mail. When they finish entering the information, they simply click a "submit" button, and Domino replicates the information to the Lotus Notes database at UptimeOne.

To come: more online functions for more customers

Dickey says that Basic has received very positive feedback from customers. One customer affirms, "You've hit a home run with this — way to go." Another customer comments on the order status, crop reports and spec sheets: "Nicely done and very useful ... no other vendor is providing this kind of service."

In the future, Basic plans to expand its extranet to serve its smaller customers as well, and may enable UptimeOne's online order entry. And as customers increasingly adopt the Web self-service channel, the company expects to further reduce its fax and call center communications costs by 20 percent to 30 percent annually, and increase topline growth as well.

Says Dickey, "Our key objective going into the e-business arena was to better serve our customers with vital order information. With UptimeOne's food industry specific ASP offering, powered by IBM WebSphere Application Server, we have achieved that goal."

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

Visit us at:
ibm.com/e-business

For more information about
Basic Vegetable Products and UptimeOne, visit:
www.basicveg.com
www.uptimeone.com



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2000

IBM Corporation
Software Group
Route 100
Somers, New York 10589

Printed in the United States of America
08-00
All Rights Reserved

AS/400, DB2, DB2 Universal Database, the e-business logo, IBM and WebSphere are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Domino, Lotus and Lotus Notes are trademarks of Lotus Development Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Windows NT is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Java and all Java-based trademarks are trademarks of Sun Microsystems, Inc. in the United States, other countries or both.

e-businessOne is a trademark of UptimeOne in the United States, other countries or both.

Other company, product or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

This case study illustrates how one customer uses IBM products. Many factors have contributed to the results and benefits described. IBM does not guarantee comparable results. All information contained herein was provided by the featured customer and IBM Business Partner. IBM does not attest to its accuracy.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.



Printed in the United States on recycled paper
containing 10% recovered post-consumer fiber.



G325-6688-00