

A special report
May 2002



WebSphere software

Simplifying infrastructure software decisions.

Contents

- 2 *You face tough choices ahead***
- 3 *Start small and take one step at a time***
- 4 *Integrate business information, applications and processes to build better relationships***
- 6 *Develop and deploy better applications faster***
- 6 *Leverage open-standards support***
- 7 *Consider WebSphere infrastructure software for your e-business***
- 7 *For more information***

You face tough choices ahead

Even as changes in the global economy hit budgets hard at home, you're expected to forge ahead into new territories. To seek out and support revenue-driving opportunities through innovative IT channels. To build, adapt and deploy high-performance applications quickly. And to show immediate return on investment (ROI). The challenges ahead mean you have tough decisions to make today. But making the right choices for your business doesn't have to be gut-wrenching. If the core of your IT infrastructure is flexible, you can make better decisions for your business, faster.

If you're not there yet, you're not alone. As business demands put pressure on your IT department – finding the right IT-driven solution is increasingly critical to your success. Large or small, just around the corner, or distributed around the world – you have different business challenges and needs. And complicated decisions – like how to integrate existing assets efficiently.

You have to be ready to integrate key processes and systems with a broader spectrum of technologies. Add transaction capability and new, value-added services to expand your customer base – without redesigning your systems or writing applications from scratch. Quickly connect servers and applications across enterprise-wide departments and manage operations cost-effectively. Maintain and improve productivity of an increasingly distributed – even mobile – workforce with diverse functions but common goals. And streamline processes to trade more efficiently with worldwide suppliers using disparate systems.



*Whirlpool imagined
IT could be better*

Whirlpool, a worldwide, leading manufacturer of major home appliances, needed a more adaptive and versatile supply chain management strategy to respond faster to market changes and stay ahead of the competition. A more flexible IT infrastructure to streamline operational processes and to accommodate evolving business strategy. And Whirlpool wanted to reduce product development and rollout cycles to meet distributor and customer demands faster. The solution? Tightly integrate Whirlpool's product development system with SAP to link demand information with production processes. And replace point-to-point integration infrastructure with a flexible, inclusive integration platform from IBM. As a result, Whirlpool reduced product rollout cycle times 66% from 30 to 10 days, and realized reduced IT costs to maintain the integrated infrastructure. Whirlpool also improved the efficiency of their ordering process by creating a B2B trading portal using IBM WebSphere software. Through an easy-to-use Web-based system, trading partners can order Whirlpool products and services faster. The self-service system reduced operating costs by 80% and provided 100% ROI.

Choose wisely, and the increased speed and efficiency you gain – as well as the money you save – can help you establish longer-lasting, more beneficial business relationships with customers, trading partners and suppliers. You know a lot rides on your decision. Start with the right infrastructure software and you can be running operations smoothly, building applications faster, strengthening your business relationships and retaining more customers. Not sure where to start? Just take one step at a time and the rest will follow.

Start small and take one step at a time

The dot-com days of heavy investments and promises of exponential returns are over. You need quick, measurable ROI every step of the way to identify IT contributions to the business bottom line. As you demonstrate ROI with incremental investments, you can develop a stronger case for more expansive projects. Start with an infrastructure that's flexible, and you can grow responsibly with calculated investments that scale to meet emerging needs. Start small – for example, with a single-server deployment – and build your IT infrastructure in logical steps as your IT requirements increase. You want to make the most out of your IT staff's existing talents and skills so you don't waste time or money training on dead-end technologies. And mine previous IT investments – keeping functional code and important customer data, for instance – that can be reused to meet new demands. When you build strategically, in increments, the challenge is less daunting.

The bigger your business grows, the more complicated your IT infrastructure is likely to be. Without careful planning, adapting smoothly, and in time to meet changing needs, can be difficult. And your systems can be costly to update. You have distributed development environments. Geographically dispersed – and mobile – teams. Various skills sets and competing standards. All only add to the complexity you face. With compounding constraints, you can't adapt as quickly as you need to. And the efficiency of your critical business processes can suffer, undermining your strategic plan and impacting your company's bottom line. There's an easier way.

Integrate business information, applications and processes to build better relationships

Integrated processes operate more efficiently, saving production steps and resources along the way. With an integrated IT infrastructure, you can share key business data quickly among employees, customers and trading partners. That's why tightening connections between information, applications and processes is a critical first step to successful collaboration and communication. In the end, the improvements you make to your IT infrastructure can help you build better, longer-lasting business relationships.

Connect and integrate business information

To create security-rich connections between employees, trading partners, suppliers and customers and your business data and applications – internally, through the Web or across wireless systems – requires considerable software flexibility. You need reliable, realtime exchange and integration of business information, so that you can automate processes. Manage the most complex infrastructures easily. Communicate more effectively. And make better business decisions. Choose proven messaging technology that runs across multiple platforms, and you can achieve tighter, more seamless enterprise-wide connectivity. And your application vendors can save time – because they won't need proprietary tools to connect to you. As a result, you'll be better prepared for business-to-business trading exchange opportunities as you move to the Web.

Streamline the processes of complex systems

Linking different business systems – like accounting, manufacturing, inventory and supply chain management – facilitates smoother business transactions inside and outside your company. And allows you to make more timely decisions. You can streamline and speed up key business processes – enabling you to trade more efficiently and to keep operational costs in check. But business processes can seem inflexible because they can rely on numerous, highly complex systems that by design run independently on different platforms. As you change your process models, your IT infrastructure has to stretch and bend without breaking. You need a

complete software solution that allows you to easily model, automate and monitor your new integrated processes. And to build with tools designed to ease and speed up implementation. Find industry-specific solutions with templates and prebuilt features to save development time. Potentially, you can improve interactivity throughout your enterprise, among people and applications.

Improve user experience to build better relationships

You can enable your business systems to provide a better experience for your users and offer an integrated view to customers, trading partners and employees. Build business-to-business and business-to-customer portals that deliver rich, dynamic content. Use personalization tools to build Web sites that attract and retain customers and help employees work collaboratively. Offer enhanced content management and differentiate your e-business from the competition. Incorporate reliable, security-rich pervasive computing solutions – whether wireless or voice-based— that connect systems, devices and people. And leverage e-commerce solutions that help you build and improve strategic business relationships and manage complex business processes with Web-based trading partners. Successful integration of enterprise systems and processes allows you to offer a consistent, tailored experience with full transactional support.

“We were very impressed...with the open standards support [IBM WebSphere Portal] delivered for Web services, as well as the out-of-box integration. Now... IBM has made a collaborative environment even better. The new release provides more embedded capabilities, which will enable us to quickly extend our portal-driven activities in a number of new directions—all on a single, integrated platform. We’d have to go to multiple vendors to pull together what IBM has built into WebSphere Portal.”

– Randy Mowen, director
Data Management and e-Business Architecture
The Bekins Company

Develop and deploy better applications faster

An integrated, collaborative application development environment with a robust tool set can help you build and deploy integration-ready applications faster. Decrease your dependency on specialized skills. Automate development tasks. And allow more time to benefit from your entire team's collective and creative problem-solving expertise. By not duplicating efforts or errors – and by rewriting less code – developers can build higher-quality traditional and Web applications faster. With an open-community workbench, your IT staff can work intelligently as a team. Promote roles-based development. Increase team-wide productivity. And focus on common objectives. Your IT team can use the tools they need and prefer for special tasks, including their favorite tools from a variety of vendors. Save time and work smarter through a common intuitive interface, based on open-source Eclipse technology.

“We anticipate a real boost to developer productivity through tighter integration with WebSphere tools and complementary tools from other vendors. It's great to see IBM working with its trading partners to build a truly open, integrated and vendor-independent development environment.”

– Dave Kulakowski, manager
Development and Technology
Honeywell Aircraft Landing Systems

Leverage open-standards support

Every step of infrastructure development includes making a choice between a proprietary solution or one built on open, industry standards. Only open standards give you the level of flexibility needed to change your technology strategies as your business needs change. To better integrate your existing disparate or legacy systems, whether purchased or inherited. And to free you from being tied to any one vendor or platform that may – or may not – be compatible with your company's future.

“IBM presented a clear vision for Web services. It showed us how we could leverage WebSphere software...to build an infrastructure that would allow us to quickly and easily deploy almost any Web service.”

– Espen Sletteng, enterprise architect
Storebrand, 2002



Barclaycard banks on IBM strength

As pioneers of security-rich online banking in the United Kingdom (U.K.), Barclaycard has offered unprecedented fraud protection services to online customers since 1994. As customers embraced Barclaycard's Internet services, the company decided to expand its Web presence to let customers fully access their credit card accounts online. Review statements. Make payments. And apply for additional credit and other banking services. But the company realized early that its IT infrastructure wouldn't support the 3 million customers expected to register.

Barclaycard chose the WebSphere software platform to meet its rapidly expanding IT needs. First, Barclaycard deployed IBM MQSeries® middleware to integrate its Web front-end with legacy IBM batch-processing systems. Then the Barclaycard team leveraged IBM expertise to get their new platform up and running before existing capacity was reached. IBM worked closely with Barclaycard at every stage of the project, from application design and development to full solution implementation. IBM consultants conducted rigorous tests to help ensure a successful launch with second-to-none security for Barclaycard's online customers' private, financial information.

Today, Barclaycard's e-business runs dependably on a scalable IBM WebSphere software-based IT infrastructure—including IBM WebSphere Application Server—which delivers fast response times at high volumes. How many transactions can they handle? Enough to satisfy 600,000 U.K. Barclaycard account holders and attract 5,000 more each week.

Extending your applications and data in the e-business world depends on the successful implementation of solutions that incorporate support for open industry standards. Using new technologies that support Java™ 2 Platform, Enterprise Edition (J2EE) standards, as well as XML and other standards, you can quickly and easily build function-rich Web services and high-quality Web-based applications.

Consider the WebSphere infrastructure software for your e-business

Companies large and small rely on the strength of the IBM WebSphere infrastructure software to build and deploy high-performance applications and e-business solutions based on open standards. WebSphere integration software enables buyers and sellers to integrate quickly and easily with each other's processes and data for automated procurement and distribution systems in conformance with industry standards. And help you build integrated trading partner networks. WebSphere software provides an integrated and robust, open development environment to help your developers collaborate as they build and deploy highly flexible, industry standard-compliant solutions. Make the transition to e-business faster, and stay within your budget. And realize measurable ROI.

With WebSphere software, you can leverage open standards and cutting-edge technologies like Universal Description, Discovery and Integration (UDDI), Simple Object Access Protocol (SOAP), J2EE, Web Services Description Language (WSDL) and enhanced integration of leading XML technologies. The tools you need to support, develop, publish and deploy Web services applications. Wherever you are on the path to successful e-business, IBM offers extensive resources – including best-of-breed solutions from IBM Business Partners and leading e-business application providers – to customize a solution that's appropriate for you.

For more information

To learn more about the IBM WebSphere software platform for e-business, or to find out how you can improve your IT infrastructure with WebSphere solutions, visit ibm.com/websphere.



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