GE Capital

GE web site chosen by business leaders as best Internet commerce site.

Summary

GE Capital customers have always been able to obtain information from sales personnel. But now, customers can get all the information they need from a web site, seven days a week, 24 hours a day. GE's CycleConnect is a site that not only distributes information, but also allows customers to place orders, obtain up-to-the-minute pricing information, and track orders. The site is such an exemplary use of technology that it won a 1998 CIPA award. The site was developed with WebObjects application server software from Apple Computer.

Key Benefits

- Integrates seamlessly with legacy systems and systems planned for the future
- Provides an e-commerce application that eliminates errors inherent in manual transactions
- Automatically integrates customers' orders with GE's order fulfillment processes

Many web applications improve business relations. Many others use creative technological innovations. Few, however, have been recognized by business leaders as showing such quality and technological achievement that they enhance the quality of life.

Each year, the Canadian Information Productivity Awards (CIPA) recognizes individuals and organizations making the most effective use of information technology (www.cipa.com). As business, government, and other institutions become transformed by technology, CIPA identifies organizations whose expertise and innovation make lasting contributions to society. In the area of Internet commerce, GE Capital Information Technology Solutions won the 1998 Best of Category award.

GE Capital Information Technology Solutions provides consulting and planning services for its large base of Fortune 500 customers. One of the largest resellers of technology in the world, it maintains a diverse inventory of hardware, software, and connectivity solutions. GE CycleConnect is a powerful, one-stop online source for an organization's computer technology purchases. The site provides all of the product and service information customers need, as well as the means to electronically place an order and track its fulfillment.

Challenge

Configuring solutions for large customers used to be tremendously complex. Vice president and CIO Sharon Wallace says, "Because we resell multiple technologies, our customers may buy Compaq PCs but they might want to install Kingston memory and NEC monitors. Before GE CycleConnect, they had no ready access to various vendor information. They'd have to get spec sheets from different suppliers or visit different web sites to get the information they needed. Our sales staff can always put this information together for customers, but now, customers can do it quickly and easily themselves."

Alice Thomas, GE Capital electronic commerce manager, says, "Our objective was to have an online site that provided value-added services to our customers. Specifically, the goal was to allow our customers ease of access to information—such as products and pricing—as well as ease of order placement. Internal goals were to reduce the cycle time to place an order, eliminate errors from handoffs and manual intervention, and reduce operating costs."

Solution

The GE CycleConnect site was developed with WebObjects application server software from Apple Computer. "WebObjects allowed us to take an object-oriented approach to applications development," says Thomas. "With the many adaptors WebObjects provides, we were able to

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—Alice Thomas, Electronic Commerce Manager
GE Capital Information Technology Solutions

easily integrate with our Oracle database." She continues, "We looked at other web development tools and concluded that if we were really serious about electronic commerce on an enterprise-wide scale, we needed a solution that was robust, scalable, flexible, and easily integratable with our Oracle database as well as the SAP system we'll be using in the future." GE Capital plans to expand its global operations and is actively recruiting web developers to join its team.

Benefits

Thomas says that the greatest benefit to developing in WebObjects was its seamless connectivity to GE legacy systems and particularly to its order management databases. "Other e-commerce sites still have rudimentary ways of taking in orders or using manual intervention. We take the customer's order online and automatically integrate with our back-end applications," she says. The customer is then sent an online confirmation of the order, with both a GE order number and its own P.O., which allows the customer to track the order.

GE is particularly pleased with the additional channel the GE CycleConnect site gives customers. "It is another way to service our customers," says Thomas, "but it is available seven days a week, 24 hours a day. It's convenient, easy to use, and most of all, provides up-to-date, accurate information for our customers. WebObjects was a 'Cadillac' solution and it fit our needs."

For More Information

For more information about WebObjects, contact Apple Enterprise Software at 1-800-848-6398 or visit www.apple.com/webobjects.

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