



Industrial Manufacturer Re-Tools Its Catalog for e-Commerce

Client

Greenleaf Corporation
www.greenleafglobalsupport.com

Industry

Industrial cutting tool manufacturer

Challenge

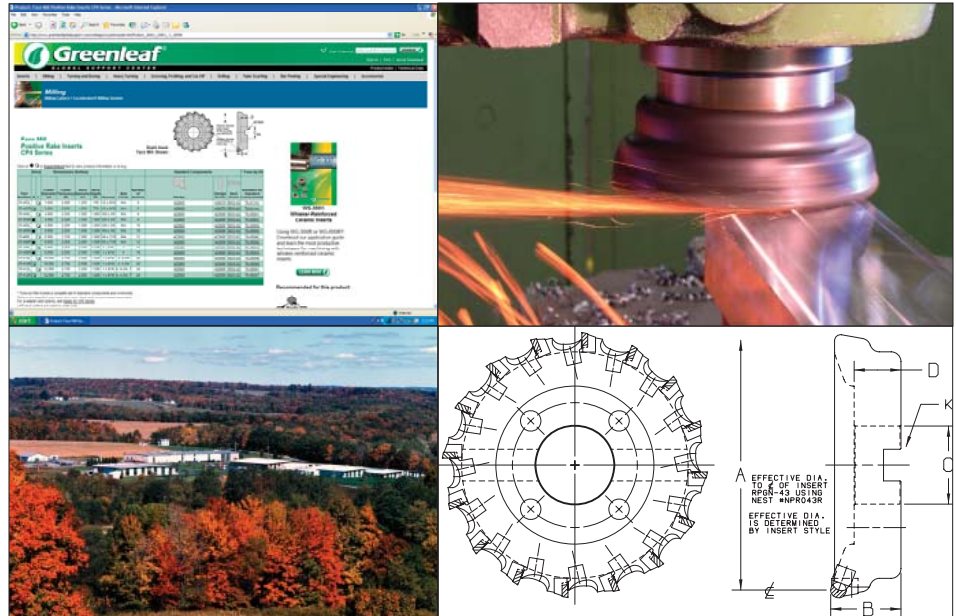
Greenleaf wanted to expand from its traditional catalog-based business model to an e-commerce site that would make it easy to find, purchase, and get technical information about its 15,000 catalog items.

Why Sirius Computer Solutions

Because of its expertise in e-business and IBM WebSphere® Commerce, along with its strong IBM partnership, the team from Sirius was able to bring the necessary skills and talents together to put the catalog online. And despite the huge number of SKUs and the technical detail of each item, they were still able to make it easy to use.

Solution

IBM WebSphere Commerce, running on Linux® on IBM System x™ servers, provides the foundation for a rich e-commerce site that was customized to accommodate the company's extensive catalog and provide detailed technical information about each part. WebSphere MQ allows real-time integration with Greenleaf's proprietary ERP system on an IBM iSeries™ server.



A family-owned company dating back to 1945, Greenleaf Corporation is a leading developer of cutting-tool technology, specializing in the manufacture of high-performance tungsten carbide and ceramic inserts as well as innovative toolholding systems.

Today, Greenleaf supplies cutting tools to customers in 39 countries from its headquarters in Saegertown, Pennsylvania and a facility in North Carolina. The company carries over 15,000 items that are used for machining in a wide variety of industries, including gas turbines, steel, medical, roll turning, automotive, machine tool and rail.

Greenleaf wanted to make their extensive catalog of parts available to current and potential customers around the world through a comprehensive e-commerce site that would be tied to its inventory system. Greenleaf also wanted to publish technical information about its entire product line, to help their customers make informed buying decisions and get detailed information about the application of each of the products. So they turned to IBM® Premier Business Partner Sirius Computer Solutions.

According to Bill Greenleaf, Marketing Manager for Greenleaf Corporation and grandson of the company's founder, "We don't have the manpower to be in every machine shop around the world. We wanted a site that would help us connect with our current customers, and also get us into shops we don't know about. We knew a comprehensive e-commerce site would not only be a novel way to sell our products, but would also help our customers make informed decisions about those products."



With a catalog of more than 15,000 SKUs, one of biggest challenges was making it easy for current and potential customers to find specific parts. To make site navigation as intuitive as possible, the taxonomy of their printed catalog was replicated online, simplifying the process of drilling down for individual parts. Says Bill Greenleaf, "It was essential that the site be consistent with our print catalog, because that's what our customers are familiar with."

Furthermore, because the product line is very technical in nature, it was important to depict all the technical specifications and applications with a level of detail that wasn't possible with a traditional catalog.

Gerald Doubet, Information Technology Manager at Greenleaf, saw that IBM WebSphere software was an excellent fit for their application. "Based on the requirements that were passed on by Bill and the marketing team, I looked at our options and realized that WebSphere Commerce and MQ provided the best possible solution. It was robust, and it was flexible enough that we could use it as the basis for a true custom site."

Bill Greenleaf added, "We really wanted a proven, off-the-shelf e-commerce technology, with features that could be customized to fit our needs, and that was exactly what we found in WebSphere Commerce. Then it was just a matter of finding the right partner to help us implement it."

Real-time integration with ERP

Greenleaf has been using an IBM iSeries model 810 server to host its in-house-developed ERP applications, which control all aspects of the business from accounting to inventory. But that server's operating system was the only IBM software that Greenleaf was using, or had any experience with. So the company started evaluating solution providers to find the right company to help not just with their e-commerce implementation, but also with integrating it with their in-house ERP programs.

Both Bill and Gerald agree that experience was a major factor in choosing Sirius. "We decided to partner with Sirius and IBM because we wanted the best, most professional products and partners to achieve our goal. We looked pretty aggressively for recommendations and references for vendors who had extensive experience implementing commerce sites. And it paid off—the team from Sirius was simply head and shoulders above any other vendors we had dealt with."

The solution provided by Sirius is based on WebSphere Commerce running on Linux on IBM System x servers. Orders coming from the commerce site pass through instantly to the System i server through WebSphere MQ. And product quantities in their inventory are updated approximately every few minutes, so customers have near-real-time visibility into the company's inventory.

Exceeding high expectations

According to Bill Greenleaf, "We anticipate that by implementing this e-commerce strategy, we will be able to grow our revenue, market share and customer base, enter new markets, and extend our reach in existing markets where we haven't had much penetration. That's a lot to expect from a Web site, but we're confident that we will meet or exceed our goals in time."

The expertise provided by Sirius, along with the head start offered by WebSphere Commerce, shaved considerable time off their development schedule.

Gerald Doubet concludes, "We knew we had a big challenge ahead of us, in terms of bringing together a lot of technology and a lot of product. It helped that we've had a great relationship with Sirius. Along the way there was a lot of communications. If we hadn't chosen the commerce solution and the partner we did, we would have had a lot more trouble implementing. And we'd probably still be waiting to go live."

Key Benefits

- Greenleaf's published catalog, comprising more than 15,000 SKUs, is now available online.
- The catalog metaphor makes it fast and easy for customers to find the items they need.
- Detailed specifications and images provide customers with immediate access to the technical information they need to choose and use the products.
- Integration with the company's ERP solution allows real-time ordering, and near-real-time visibility into inventory for customers.

"The WebSphere solution that Sirius provided just couldn't have been a better implementation of our concept. It's a nice, robust solution."

– Gerald Doubet
Information Technology Manager
Greenleaf Corporation

For more information

To learn more about implementing robust, scalable commerce solutions using IBM WebSphere, or any other business computing needs, please contact your Sirius account executive, or visit www.siriuscom.com



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