

e-buzz - Case Study

looksoftware™

Critical issue

- ▶ Required a reuse based approach that could transform the 5250 presentation of Bridge/400 into a modern, web look and feel that was consistent with EasyOrder® Front Office.

Solution

- ▶ Rule based, dynamic generation of rich client with same look and feel of existing Web applications.

Results

- ▶ 2,000 screens modernized in 120 days
- ▶ Support for secure SaaS distribution
- ▶ Easy and fast development
- ▶ Portal functionality
- ▶ Future opportunities for desktop integration and SOA compliant web services
- ▶ 17 sales in the first year

Reuse strategy delivers 17 sales in the first year with hundreds more expected!

Background

e-buzz was established in 1988 as a fully owned subsidiary of the Dutch application builder kærtSoftware bv. kærtSoftware products include, among others, the BRIDGE/400 ERP system. e-buzz is headquartered in Hoofddorp, Netherlands and specializes in the development and implementation of web-based order management systems known as the Easy Order® suite. Today Easy Order® is used by over 1.2 million users from more than 300 high profile organizations around Europe, including Ahrend Office Products, Bavaria, Corporate Express Europe, Despec, Lindell, Nederlandse Expert Groep, NewCo Europe, Shop Service Center and Spar Holding. The 'Software as a Service' (SaaS) model has enabled new customers to be up and running quickly without costly and time-consuming infrastructure upgrades.

In June 2007, ECI 2 Europe Ltd, a subsidiary of the US company eCommerce Industries, Inc. acquired e-buzz. ECI 2, a recognized leader in the office supplies segment, focuses on e-Commerce and supply chain integration, so for e-buzz the 'marriage' with ECI 2 was a natural union!

e-buzz's main product Easy Order®, can be used to publish clients' catalogues on the internet either as Business-to-Business (B2B) or Business-to-Consumer (B2C) options. The B2C version can also be used for consumer websites. Customers and prospects are given access according to their own pre-defined conditions. Customers can enter orders online and, at the same time, they have the option of exchanging data from their own applications using Easy Order®.

Throughout the development of their range of software applications,

e-buzz has focused on delivering a number of key benefits and advantages to its clients, including:

- implementing significant efficiency improvements
- creating a connection between the organization and its customers
- supplying standardized software and avoiding unforeseen development costs
- being available as the application of choice in most languages and currencies
- providing fast, stable and, especially, scalable software

Easy Order® provides a web-shop that enables customers to integrate most of the business administration systems available in Europe, such as SAP, Navision, Exacta, Progress, etc. Easy Connect® is for customers who have access to efficient computerized systems, and it provides the possibility of exchanging data without involving the ERP system.

For those organizations who carry a large, international or highly changeable product range, Easy Catalog® can reduce the hassles associated with maintaining such a complex range of products. Suppliers are given access through the internet to enable easy updating, authorization and dispatch to business administration and/or other interested parties.



All products in the Easy suite can be delivered over the web as SaaS, delivering a number of major advantages. Costs are reduced because the customer does not need to invest in hardware, software, infrastructure, or specialist knowledge. Costs are also predictable because customers pay a fixed monthly fee which gives them the use of all the features offered – 24/7, without having to worry about system administration.

Challenge

Having successfully developed their new front-end e-Commerce suite, and with sales of the older (5250 green screen) Bridge/400 product in decline, e-buzz decided they could possibly open up a new opportunity for their business by revamping their Bridge/400 ERP (back-end) solution and integrating it with the EasyOrder® suite.

They wanted to get a new product to market quickly and with minimum risk of failure, so it became clear that a reuse driven approach was required. Rewriting the application from scratch made no sense – Bridge/400 was a feature-rich, robust ERP application already resident on their platform of choice – the System i.

The key challenge was to find a reuse based approach that could transform the 5250 presentation of Bridge/400 into a modern, web look and feel that was consistent with EasyOrder® Front Office.

Solution

They researched their options, and discovered looksoftware through its reseller partner Inform'Aid, based in Valkenswaard, Netherlands.

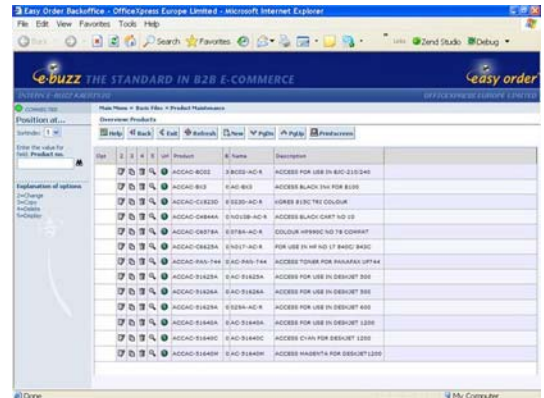
Having seen the software demonstrated, they chose to run with the recently released Version 7 of newlook which at that time was in prototype.

Having had a bad experience with Java and other third party tools, e-buzz was pleasantly surprised at the ease-of-use offered by newlook and at how quickly they could achieve meaningful progress and real outcomes. *"newlook met our needs perfectly"*, said Siebe Vos, Research & Development Manager at e-buzz.

With no need to access the 5250 green screen, and with the same look and feel as its front-end companion, Easy Order® Back Office was an instant success with users.

Benefits

"We did not have to rewrite any RPG code, it is language independent, easy to maintain and we delivered the recycled application in only 120 days – an amazing achievement considering there were 2,000 screens to modernize!" said Siebe.



e-buzz Managing Director, Pieter Reijnders said, *"This is one of the most exciting phases in our company history. We have already rolled the new product out to 17 customers in the first year with an additional 200 customers achievable over the next 2 to 3 years."*

Siebe lists the following additional benefits of the looksoftware approach:

- support for secure SaaS distributions
- easy and fast development
- easy to implement (little formal training was required)
- easy to maintain (1 day a month)
- changes require no testing!
- easy to publish new versions
- SSL security
- portal functionality (integration with other web environments is possible)
- future opportunities for desktop integration and SOA compliant web services
- also, and most importantly, typical System i users like it!

So, for an application suite with the 'Easy' word all the way through it – looksoftware was the obvious choice!

