

BD partners with Content DSI to streamline product information management and Web-enable its product catalog.



BD's Goals

- Consolidate product information into a central repository
- Deploy a Web catalog consistent with its current Internet presence and corporate identity
- Shorten response time for customer service representatives
- Provide customers with advanced search capabilities
- Reduce product information maintenance and administrative tasks

The Solution

A custom product information management and publishing system with an e-catalog front-end published on the company Intranet and the World Wide Web.

BACKGROUND

BD (formerly Becton Dickinson) is a leading worldwide manufacturer and seller of medical supplies, devices, and diagnostic systems for use by healthcare professionals, research institutions, industrial companies, and the general public. Historically, the company has reached these various customers via market segment focused businesses. However, the rapid changes in healthcare, greater cost consciousness, and consolidations throughout the industry caused it to re-think that approach.

The shifting industry trends, along with a new internal strategy emphasizing simplified customer service led BD to approach those markets as a single entity. The cultural shift to the vision of "One Company" implied that it re-define its information management and delivery infrastructure.

THE CHALLENGE

To facilitate the new "One Company" strategy, BD wanted to centralize its database of thousands of products to enable internal staff and external customers to access all of the information in a single location. BD chose to deploy the new catalog in an online environment so that users could benefit from the advanced searching capabilities and constant availability offered by the Web.

In addition to the efficiency gains offered by centralizing their product content, BD also realized the potential to dramatically reduce costs in their customer service operations. Since most customer service calls are product related, BD recognized that having their product catalog available to their representatives online would result in a drastic reduction in time spent searching for product information. As a next step, BD planned to make the Web-based catalog available outside of the organization, enabling customers to answer high-level product questions on their own.

To complete this task, BD wanted to partner with a company with extensive content management expertise along with Web and database publishing experience. This set of requirements led BD to Content Data Solutions, Inc. (formerly Thomas Technology Solutions, Inc.).

THE SOLUTION

Although BD had a Web presence before coming to Content DSI, they recognized the need to provide their customers with a more robust online catalog to keep pace with evolving product presentation technologies. After working with BD to document their product information delivery processes and analyze their product data, Content DSI suggested a centralized electronic catalog publishing environment built around an Oracle database utilizing SAQQARA's Product Server™ catalog management software and Step Search® query technology.

The SAQQARA software was selected because the parametric search functionality fit the way BD's customers searched for products and was also appropriate for BD's large number of complex products. Step Search allows users to select multiple product attributes to drill down to the product that matches their specifications. Once users narrow their search to several similar products, they can compare them side-by-side in a convenient, dynamic table format.

Content DSI then worked with BD's product managers to determine a logical breakdown of product families from the 2,400 items that BD manufactures. Content DSI organized the product descriptions and graphics and converted BD's legacy data to an Oracle platform.

Early in 1999, BD deployed the new catalog solution on the company intranet, and later that year, launched its electronic catalog on the Internet (catalog.bd.com). Initially, the online catalog contained a significant subset of BD's products.

Technology Employed

Oracle

Microsoft Internet Information Server

SAQQARA Product Server™

SAQQARA Step Search®

Microsoft Office

Content DSI Company Overview

Content Data Solutions, Inc., a software and systems integrator, provides custom content management, cross-media publishing and e-business solutions to leading commercial publishers, industrial manufacturers and other content centric companies.

We apply proven methodologies and processes to help enable our clients to author, store and manage information from a central data repository, publish that information in multiple formats and import and export data to and from internal business systems. Our solutions help companies efficiently manage and publish their information.

Content DSI has the experience and expertise to develop a clear understanding of our clients' goals, requirements and business issues. We then recommend, design and implement an effective solution to satisfy their needs.

We highly value the relationships we establish with our clients and are dedicated to delivering the highest level of service.

■ SUCCESSFUL RESULTS

BD's Catalog Solution enables its Healthcare Systems Division to maintain a centralized product database that contains all of its product images, pricing, and editorial copy. This centralized system has streamlined BD's product information maintenance process, saving time and money—and freeing valuable resources. In addition, the solution has reduced the time it takes BD to publish updated or new product information.

BD's online catalog has also helped reduce query response time for their customer service reps, search time for their customers, and has positioned them to be able to fully take advantage of e-commerce in the near future.

"Initial reactions to our catalog have been very positive, and tracking of the site's usage confirms our initial assumptions about our customers. The BD electronic catalog is an important element in our overall strategy to support our customers' information needs; but it also forms the basis for any future e-commerce initiatives we will undertake," says Paul Peloquin, director of advanced concept development at BD.

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