

Case Study on the Implementation of WebSphere Commerce at HobbyHall, Finland

Introduction

HobbyHall is a leading retail store operating in the Nordic region. The company is division of STOCKMANN group, which has its own chain of retail stores and malls throughout Eastern Europe.

Stockmann is a Finnish listed company which was established in 1862 and is engaged in the retail trade. It now has about 40 000 shareholders. Customer satisfaction is the central objective of Stockmann's trading in all its areas of business. Stockmann's three divisions are the [Department Store Division](#), [Hobby Hall](#), which is specialized in mail order sales and e-commerce, and [Seppälä](#), a chain of fashion stores. Stockmann operates in Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Demands on the architecture

HobbyHall required a fully featured Webshop integrated with their global website. This Webshop is to offer all their products in the web for the users to browse thorough and shop them online. Hobbyhall did have their own legacy site in place in the .Net platform (www.hobbyhall.fi). The old platform was not flexible enough for the ever changing requirements pertaining to campaigns, e-marketing, etc. and was basically difficult to maintain.

They decided to go for a complete revamp to address the above problems and also to design a central maintenance solution to support their operation in all the countries they operate for eg:- Finland, Estonia, Russia, etc.

The new Webshop needed to address the order processing, shopping baskets and other features for marketing pricing and content management. In addition to this, the Webshop also needed to be integrated with the existing AS 400 backend which they have in place for replication of product information and real-time content updates.

Reason for choosing WebSphere Commerce

The solution to the business challenge was to utilize WebSphere Commerce, which provides:

- A highly flexible replication model to roll-out to different markets (identical stores but customisable product management; order management; promotions; discounts; marketing campaigns; taxes & charges; 'store front' design; etc)
- A common business flow but fine-grained administration and maintenance control (both at global and various local levels)



- A single central accounting functionality which deals with variation in credit card functionality, currency & tax.
- Supports the multi-lingual requirement as they needed to roll out the site in different countries.
- Supports the integration to AS 400 machines via the Websphere Message Broker. The products/inventory and the order pricing information are fed from the existing AS 400 systems.

How Cnetric Helped

The Cnetric team is involved rebuilding the existing HobbyHall site in the WebSphere Commerce platform and the customisation of relevant components. The main usage of the portal is to provide tailor-made, detailed product information to customers in the region. The implementation of WebSphere Commerce now provides the following benefits to HobbyHall: -

1. It was implemented as an 'out-of-the-box' B2C solution rolling-out to 5 countries in the region, namely Finland, Estonia, Russia, Latvia and Lithuania with customisation according to the requirements of each country.
2. A new customer interface which has been reworked to maintain the intelligibility, straightforwardness and ease of use of the earlier system while increasing the attractiveness and providing the required incentive to potential clients to buy off the site.
3. The solution utilized the order processing shopping basket functionality within WebSphere Commerce as well as enhanced catalogue handling, common administration and workflow functions.
4. Utilisation of the Product catalogue feature of WCS and maintenance of product information in multiple languages as well as creation of 'virtual products' that link to real products. Virtual products are the front-end link to actual products which are different only in terms of certain parameters such as size and colour. If needed, products had to be available under different sub-categories. However, when searched for, a 'do-not-show' feature would ensure that only one result would be displayed.
5. The solution was customized to dovetail with existing legacy catalogue and existing legacy shopping pages so as to take advantage of existing assets and avoid tedious rework.



6. Customer service features such as product search were implemented to make it easier for customers to navigate through the site and find the products that they require faster, thereby increasing customer satisfaction.

7. The Site Map feature of WCS was used to provide an entry point for the search engine crawlers (such as Google) to easily follow the links within your Web pages and also helps customers to navigate through the site, especially those customers with slower internet connections. As a result, it reduces the time that it takes for the content refresh to be reflected in the search engine. As new content and products are added to the site, the site map becomes the easiest way to bring this content forward to be indexed by crawlers.

8. The solution also provides order history where, after logging onto the store, registered customers can check the detailed status of their orders. Orders made by the customer are recorded and can be checked after the customer logs on. Reviews orders placed by the customer.

9. Customer can track their orders after logging onto the store. Orders made by the customer are recorded and can be checked after the customer logs on. A customer can also track the orders by clicking an order tracking URL. Customers can choose any order in the summary table and view the details. For the selected order, a page displays with detailed order status information. The complete list of purchased products is shown on this page.

10. HobbyHall wanted to use the customer feedback feature where customers are now able to send in their comments and feedback to the concerned people within HobbyHall, who will receive and respond to the feedback.

11. The "Tell-a-friend" was a new function which had to be added, wherein a customer of HobbyHall could recommend it to their friends.

12. The e-Commerce solution for HobbyHall also assisted in their need for a gift registry. HobbyHall customers could now save gift ideas for future occasions and also would be provided a gift service for an event on a particular preset date. Customers can also print out electronic gift tokens and gift certificates from the site.



13. Since the HobbyHall store is to be available across 5 countries, it needs to support multiple languages some of which has been configured from the available features in WCS.

14. The solution utilized Coremetrics reporting instead of the WebSphere Commerce Analyzer to provide the reports that were required by HobbyHall. These varied from reports on orders during a particular month, to reports on the customer feedback received during a particular month.

15. WebSphere Commerce was configured to assist HobbyHall in their marketing campaigns specifically their email marketing activities. HobbyHall has to send out two email offers to customers every months and these mails are to be in text or HTML format depending on the customer's preference. The email campaigns also needed to be scheduled and timed so as to be sent out outside of 'rush hour'.

16. In addition to marketing campaigns, HobbyHall also had other promotional activity in the form of competitions and discounts. The competitions specified by HobbyHall needed to be better directed to the customer according to customer groups and the competition layout needed to be added to the online store. Different discounts had to be based on the rules which were created with regards to discounts to the customers and/or to the customer groups. There are also additional promotions tied to bulk buying to attract customers to buying larger quantities.

17. HobbyHall also wished to increase personal marketing by tailoring personalised product offerings towards certain customer groups. This was customised in WebSphere Commerce.

18. In addition to customer feedback, HobbyHall also wished to allow their customers to rate, remark and criticise HobbyHall products in the product catalogue.

19. A new "Member get Member" feature had to be customised in WebSphere Commerce for the HobbyHall online store. With this feature, if existing members bring in new members to HobbyHall then they will get additional benefits. In addition to this, the new members also get advantages.

20. HobbyHall wished to implement auctioning as part of their e-commerce solution, which utilised the auctioning component provided by WebSphere Commerce that lets you sell products to the highest bidder and conduct auctions simultaneously.