

ECOMMERCE: LEADING ITALIAN DISTRIBUTION COMPANY CDC BOOSTS REVENUES WITH MICROSOFT® TECHNOLOGIES AND ALTITUDO

CDC Spa is one of the largest Electronics & Software Distribution Companies in Italy, which operates a vast retail distribution network. CDC is quoted on the Italian Stock Exchange. CDC maintains 32 Cash & Carry stores that distribute products to over 30,000 specialized dealers in the ICT sector through a retail distribution network. It also makes its products available directly to customers through its catalog, direct sales organization and e-commerce Internet site.

CDC's B2B eCommerce website is a key asset of the company's strategy and, to uphold its tradition of excellence, CDC sought to update its e-commerce solution, which relied on technology based on the Oracle solution. "Our Web traffic continues to grow and Italian Companies now trust the internet channel for B2B e-Commerce due to lower costs. We decided to put newer innovative technology in place to support that growth and avoid reduced performance," says Francesco Saccà, CIO for CDC. "The previous solution was nearly a decade old, making it difficult and costly to maintain. Further it didn't offer to marketers, merchandisers and business managers the flexibility to self manage campaigns with immediate time-to-market. CDC also wanted to enhance system security and reliability and ensure that it was in line with the security requirements that our partner and client companies need us to meet."

CDC selected Microsoft® Commerce Server 2007 and Altitudo consulting and implementation services as the basis for its new e-commerce solution and conducted considerable research to influence its architectural design. However, the company wanted to confirm that its proposed architectural plans were sound and that they not only met the company's initial requirements but also provided a flexible foundation that would easily accommodate future changes. "Although our immediate goal was to perform a straightforward update of the current solution, we thought that it would be valuable to put the pieces in place to incorporate dynamic and flexible e-commerce functionality over time," says Mr. Saccà. Altitudo experience and experts helped CDC to evaluate its requirements and provided CDC with a number of options to consider for the future, assisting CDC in optimizing its long-term project road map to include future functionality. For example, Altitudo supported CDC in being able to implement advanced dynamic Web functionalities by taking full advantage of e-commerce and Web solutions in marketing and promotions areas, customer loyalty programs, multi-channel solutions, and online sales support tools such as a product configurator, with the introduction of social networking functions. "CDC is launching Kraun, our branded range of computer accessories and peripherals, in some European markets. Kraun products offer stylish, Italian design and are noted for consistent quality of manufacture, but our previous e-commerce solution was not able to fully support internationalization of the company. The Microsoft based e-commerce solution we have developed is now already supporting CDC strategic expansion plans in Eurozone markets" says Mr. Saccà.

CDC decided to move to a complete Microsoft-based solution, and to integrate it with the internal ERP and with external Suppliers via EDI. The solution is based on:

- Microsoft® Commerce Server 2007
- Microsoft® BizTalk® Server
- Microsoft® Dynamics® CRM

Altitude supported CDC during the design and development of the solution. At the beginning Altitude conducted a Functional and Architectural analysis to discover the real CDC web site's outcomes and the physical and logical sizing, and explored considerations for future functionality, such as advanced integration with other back-end systems. The project took 4 months to complete.

The new B2B e-Commerce site went live on February 2009 and currently handles over 30.000 registered business customers that can search, view and buy more than 13.000 products. The new infrastructure also enabled CDC to move all pricing and ordering operations of its entire sales networks to Commerce Server.

The main benefits achieved from CDC are:

- A robust flexible and scalable eCommerce platform;
- Simple and ease-of-use tools for Business Users (Product Managers, Marketing Managers, Merchandisers and Business Managers);
- Seamless integration with the other Microsoft and non-Microsoft components used inside CDC;
- A greater insight of how all the Microsoft technologies that are involved could work together, both now and in the future;
- An enhanced of the customer experience online as a Company differentiator to gain a new customer fidelity.