

Confidence in DataMirror integration technology paves Acushnet's road to future success

Commentary by Mark Koerner, Systems Integration Specialist and Peg Nicholson, SVP & CIO, Acushnet Company

INDUSTRY

MANUFACTURING

BUSINESS APPLICATION

E-BUSINESS, B2B,
DATA WAREHOUSING



Acushnet Company, a wholly owned subsidiary of Fortune Brands, is the largest manufacturer of golf equipment in the world. With 2000 revenues of over \$965 million, the company has the top market share in golf balls, shoes and gloves on many of the worldwide professional golf tours as well as in on and off-course golf shops. Its drivers, irons, wedges and putters also very frequently win the count on the PGA Tour. Acushnet's five product lines are sold under

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the Titleist, FootJoy, Cobra and Pinnacle brand names. Acushnet sells its products through five primary channels of distribution: on-course pro shops, off-course golf shops, sporting goods stores, mass merchants, and the corporate custom channel for custom logo golf balls.

The Problem

In response to customer and employee demand for real-time access to order, payment, credit and inventory data, Acushnet determined a need for an efficient data integration solution for e-Business.

"We wanted to initiate a real-time e-Business extranet on a Microsoft SQL Server database that would empower customers through up-to-the-minute access of our production data," says Mark Koerner, Systems Integration Specialist for Acushnet.

"The problem was that we did not want to build the extranet to access our iSeries (AS/400) legacy data directly. We needed an efficient solution with filtering capabilities that would seamlessly integrate our back-end legacy systems with our new e-Business environment."

The challenge was to find a solution that would uphold the confidence of Acushnet employees and customers. The search therefore began for a software provider with a solid industry-wide reputation for high quality integration products.

The Solution

To establish a short-list of viable vendors, Acushnet went to the IBM iSeries web site, which identified all software providers who could integrate data with the iSeries platform.

As a result, the Company came across DataMirror Corporation and its real-time data integration solution, Transformation Server.

"We chose Transformation Server for two main reasons," says Peg Nicholson, SVP and CIO of Acushnet. "First, we were impressed by DataMirror's longevity in the iSeries marketplace. We also liked Transformation Server's ability to scrape iSeries journals as opposed to requiring a direct database connection."

Today, Acushnet uses Transformation Server to bi-directionally integrate its production iSeries data between its order management system and a SQL Server database running on Microsoft Windows NT/2000, which will support its soon-to-be-launched customer extranet. The Company's extranet will handle business-to-business transactions for up to 14,000 customers.

Meanwhile, Transformation Server will also capture, transform and flow data from its production iSeries to another SQL Server database, to be used for reporting purposes by hundreds of employees throughout the enterprise.

The Benefits

Although Transformation Server has not yet gone live in Acushnet's computing environment, the Company is already starting to see the benefits of real-time data access on a 24/7 basis.

Transformation Server currently integrates between 2 million and 5 million transactions per day (per SQL Server target) to approximately 130 tables.

"Although the size of our target e-Business database is 15GB today, Transformation Server will be able to accommodate increases in the amount of data being integrated," says Koerner. "Scalability is a great feature because it leaves us confident that Transformation Server will continue to flow all relevant data in real-time regardless of how big our system becomes."

By now Acushnet has seen the results of DataMirror's commitment to positive customer experiences.

"Even at this stage in the game, DataMirror sales and support staff have been very helpful," says Nicholson. "The Company appears to have many outlets for assistance, including on-line support such as video conferencing. Given our experience with DataMirror, we are confident that we will be able to rely on their expertise if any issues arise once we go live with the implementation."

Conclusions

With plans to go live with its e-Business extranet in mid-year 2001, Acushnet is confident that its project-in-the-works will be a successful venture.

"Here we have a single, flexible product that can simultaneously support our e-Business and data warehousing efforts, as well as support any new business applications that we may later envision," says Nicholson. "Although we have obviously not yet calculated any profits garnered from utilizing Transformation Server, we have already ensured a cost savings should our needs change in the future."

"Transformation Server has enabled us to provide new customer offerings and a whole new level of insight to our employee base. We're looking forward to later this year when the solution is in full production and we can enhance our commitment to customer needs through real-time data access."



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