

DataMirror helps OshKosh B'Gosh maximize meaningful data access, gain competitive insight

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BUSINESS APPLICATION

DATA WAREHOUSING



OshKosh B'Gosh has been a household name since 1895. The company's roots can be traced to manufacturing sturdy bib overalls for farm and railway workers. Today, children's wear represents 95 per cent of OshKosh B'Gosh's business worldwide. Its products are available in more than 80 countries through a network of licensees, distributors and company-owned operations. Starting with a single store in 1981, the OshKosh B'Gosh retail chain has grown to include more than 130 stores throughout the US, and an e-commerce site (www.oshkoshbgosh.com) for direct sales to consumers.

warehousing, multiple servers to maintain its company intranet and other processing as well as an e-commerce site on the Internet.

In 1995, a survey taken by the IS department showed a general feeling that data simply was not easy to access. OshKosh B'Gosh relied on sifting through mountains of paper and extracting on-line transaction processing (OLTP) data for manual input to spreadsheets for analysis. Customer service agents wanted to track cancellations and returns to determine why orders were being cancelled but had to spend three days processing a week's worth of data in order to get the answer.

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"It was taking too much time to analyze the data," says Jon Dell'Antonia, Vice President, Information Systems for OshKosh B'Gosh. "They just needed a way to get at it faster and easier."

The Company's sales force also needed to access meaningful wholesale customer sell-through data to determine how much product was moving through a particular department store.

The Problem

OshKosh B'Gosh's computing environment consists of four AS/400s (iSeries) running development, financial, sales order information and

"It was impossible for our sales people to analyze the mountain of information," says Dell'Antonia. "Even if the data was given to them

in electronic format, a spreadsheet could not manipulate all the information.”

The Solution

OshKosh B’Gosh decided to start looking at solutions to facilitate its data warehousing needs. The search began for a simple architecture that would transmit information from the production system to the data warehouse, offer the option of net-change replication, a variety of data transformations and – to accommodate future acquisitions – the ability to support replication among heterogeneous platforms, operating systems and databases.

DataMirror was considered the best choice, according to Dell’Antonia. “We were pleased with Transformation Server after seeing the limitations of a competitor’s product,” he says. “DataMirror was also able to quickly get us a copy for testing and evaluation.”

OshKosh B’Gosh currently uses Transformation Server to capture net changes of AS/400 OLTP data and provide reliable data transformation and replication for loading and replenishing the AS/400 warehouse. Cognos PowerPlay serves as the user interface for query and analysis, while Showcase Query supplies the reporting tool.

Within five months of implementation, sales and customer service personnel were able to look at information stored in the warehouse. Currently the publisher AS/400 contains 6.6 million records flagged for data replication and transformation. To date, more than

16.5 million records have been replicated to the data warehouse using DataMirror Transformation Server.

Benefits

With the warehouse solution in place, customer service agents are now able to analyze cancellation and customer return information. The process of query and analysis has been reduced from three days to less than a few hours. Sell-through information can also be tracked in a more timely and effective fashion.

In addition, OshKosh B’Gosh has implemented a system to allow its sales force to access data remotely through the company’s intranet. Sales representatives dial up and download OLAP objects to their laptops where Cognos PowerPlay is installed for query and analysis. Sales personnel simply double-click the icon and the OLAP file containing region-specific sales information installs on their desktop.

The data warehouse allows users to look at meaningful information without involving the IS staff.

“From a support standpoint, if the user has a browser and can get to the Internet, they don’t need anything more,” says Larry Plamann, Technical Support Manager for OshKosh B’Gosh. “It makes our lives easier because we don’t have to worry about the desktop.”

The Road Ahead

The data warehouse is a continually evolving application. OshKosh B’Gosh has extended access to the warehouse over the Internet. Users have password access to a personal web page where they can download OLAP files, analyze production data and generate reports. The Company also plans to use the data warehouse to access more detailed sell-through data for greater insight into customer buying patterns and to add human resource and inventory data for additional analysis.

As the IS managers at OshKosh B’Gosh see it, any technology that improves the operational efficiency of the Company makes it more competitive overall. OshKosh B’Gosh will continue to scale the data warehouse solution with the goal of streamlining business processes, enhancing revenues and sharpening its competitive edge.



DataMirror software is available on-line at datamirror.com or call 1-800-362-5955

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