

Client Success Story: Avon Global Internet

Unifying the global marketplace with a centralized Internet infrastructure

Situation:

As a result of its expertise in e-commerce and its sophisticated understanding of the global marketplace, DeCare Systems Ireland was asked to develop a coordinated strategy for Avon's Web sites in multiple markets throughout the world. Avon currently has consumers and representatives in 143 countries on 6 continents. Each region tailors its business to the unique needs of the marketplace, creating a less-than-efficient enterprise infrastructure and a fragmented brand presentation.

Avon's request stemmed from the increasing role Web technology is playing in the cosmetics industry, combined with the need to have an efficient online presence for various market segments. Essentially, the company wanted to allow each global region to maintain a business, geographic and culturally appropriate Web presence on the front end, but achieve economies of scale with system architecture, infrastructure and functionality on the back end. At the same time, the company wanted to present a unified corporate identity so that all customers, regardless of country, had the same quality and brand experience.

Finally, each global Web site had to fulfill the needs of three distinct audiences — the general public, sales representatives and zone managers.

- General public: Provide information and marketing geared toward general Internet users.
- Sales representatives: Support an overall business strategy to streamline and automate the product ordering process. It would provide ordering, billing, tracking and payment systems for each of the company's representatives that chose to participate.
- Zone managers: Provide oversight capabilities to allow zone managers to monitor the sales activities of each of their direct representatives.

Solution:

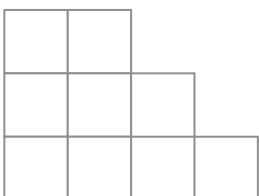
Using its expertise in the global marketplace, DeCare Systems Ireland recommended using a combination of Websphere, Java, JSP and Oracle to create separate sites for each of the three key audiences, then unite the sites using a centralized infrastructure. Two hosting centers manage the specific global sites.

Once the system architecture was completed, DeCare Systems Ireland managed a comprehensive deployment and training program to launch the sites throughout the world. Content on each site is managed by the local marketing and sales functions, which allows sites to reflect appropriate language, product lines and marketing programs.

Results:

The Avon Global Internet project received the "Pathfinder Award of Excellence," recognizing it as the beauty product company's best IT project when it was launched. To date, DeCare Systems Ireland has designed and adapted 30 global Web sites, which significantly increases the company's brand presence in those marketplaces. The overarching Web site design has been recognized by numerous IT industry organizations for its usability, functionality and effectiveness, as well as its complementary support of existing communication channels and marketing programs.

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IT support staff within the organization report the sites are extremely stable while supporting large volumes of usage. Programming staff report the architecture is highly configurable, allowing servers to maintain a manageable content load.

Product sales have increased as well. Currently, 10 percent of total sales in the United Kingdom are processed through the UK representative site. The average order value from these representatives is 1 percent higher than orders received by other means, translating into a significant overall sales increase.

Web site: www.avon.com