

Progress® Sonic ESB® helps Proflowers grow profits and success with a transaction system for its e-commerce and supply chain operations.



CASE STUDY

CHALLENGE

To sustain growth and meet increasing customer demand, the company's transaction processes needed to be revamped.

SOLUTION

Deployed Progress® Sonic ESB® to develop a flexible, scalable transaction system for e-commerce and supply chain operations.

WHY PROGRESS® SOFTWARE

Sonic ESB would facilitate the integration of disparate components of the supply chain efficiently and cost-effectively and offered the most scalable and high-performance solution.

BENEFIT

The new transaction system automatically processes Proflowers' orders, payments, and order-status e-mails based on the customer's scheduled delivery date. The company can reduce the time that products stay in the supply chain from about 12 to 4 days.

Proflowers cultivated a profit-driving online supply chain that cuts down delivery time and costs by allowing suppliers to send fresh flowers and other products direct to consumers.

FRESHENING UP THE SUPPLY CHAIN

It is a familiar scene: A caring, yet forgetful, son wakes up one morning and is struck with panic because he just remembered his mother's birthday is tomorrow. He springs from bed and logs on to Proflowers.com. Unlike other sites he has tried, Proflowers lets him send his mother a gorgeous spring bouquet that will arrive the next day—the delivery date is guaranteed.

Proflowers has cultivated an advantage over the competition: nipping the supply chain at the bud. Flowers can spend almost two weeks in the traditional supply chain, sometimes moving from importer to distributor to wholesaler to the retailer or florist—and then finally arriving at the consumer's doorstep.

Proflowers starts the process based on when its customers want flowers to arrive. Consumers place orders via telephone or the Internet, and Proflowers schedules fresh-cut flowers to be shipped directly from its network of growers the day before orders are scheduled to arrive. Orders typically spend less than four days in the overall supply chain.

"Our products are time-sensitive. We are constantly looking at the supply chain to see what key steps can be modified so the products will have a longer life span at the customers' destination," says Prana Gogia, vice president of Information Systems for Proflowers and Provide Commerce.

PLANTING AN ONLINE MARKETPLACE

To complete the supply chain, growers use Proflowers systems to securely receive orders and to generate shipping labels—so once they pack the flowers or goods, the items can be shipped immediately.

Because customers can place orders through Proflowers.com up to three months in advance, these orders need to be saved by the transaction system and queued up for processing as delivery dates approach. However, the original database-driven queue was not scalable enough to sustain the mounting demand.

It became clear that to sustain growth and meet demand, the company's transaction processes needed to be revamped. Enter Progress Software. After a thorough evaluation, Proflowers picked Progress Sonic ESB to help bolster the system. With the Sonic backbone in place, Provide Commerce has a distributed framework for standards-based application integration, which helps it create a more scalable and intuitive order management system for Proflowers.

The Sonic ESB backbone provides reliable and secure communication between services and application endpoints cooperating in a transaction across an enterprise. Sonic ESB also allows Web service endpoints to be easily added into an ESB environment. Simply put: Sonic ESB provides integration between the customers' online orders and the Proflowers back-end transaction processing. "Sonic ESB helps us manage the order process," Gogia says. "With our supply chain, flowers can last up to two weeks once they reach the customer. Our e-commerce platform uses Sonic ESB to make this possible—it facilitates the integration of disparate components of the supply chain efficiently and cost-effectively."

SONIC ESB RISES ABOVE THE COMPETITION

Progress was also picked from the competitive bunch for performance and price. "Profit margins are important in the retail industry, so we need to hit business goals in a cost-effective way," Gogia says. "At every point Progress met our needs—Sonic ESB is not only affordable and scalable, but it performs fast. We also liked the excellent support we got from the Progress team."

The budding success of Proflowers spawned the seeds for Provide Commerce to launch new e-commerce marketplaces for other high-quality perishable goods. Cherry Moon Farms (www.cherrymoonfarms.com) offers an assortment of farm-fresh and organic hand-picked fruits direct from orchards. Uptown Prime (www.uptownprime.com) offers premium meats in various cuts also for overnight delivery from ranchers.

The enhanced Provide Commerce transaction system is now a core component of its online marketplaces' success, and helps the company acquire and retain more customers and expand distribution initiatives and supplier partnerships.

With Sonic ESB, Provide Commerce—and Proflowers—has a healthy architecture to keep growing. Gogia says, "As we continue to grow our business, we are dedicated to providing the best online experience for our customers."

And just like the floral arrangements Proflowers ships, that is a beautiful thing.

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— Prana Gogia
Vice President of
Information Systems

ABOUT PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) provides application infrastructure software for the development, deployment, integration and management of business applications. Our goal is to maximize the benefits of information technology while minimizing its complexity and total cost of ownership.

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