

# Dell e-marketing

[Business](#), [Marketing](#)



The comprehensive campaign management system integrates with Dell's existing customer relationship management (CRM) system, moving the company much closer to its goal of a true closed-loop online marketing environment.

## **Company Overview**

Dell Computer Corporation is the world's leading direct computer system provider, with the company's award-winning customer service, industry-leading growth, and superior financial performance continuing to differentiate Dell from its competitors. At the heart of this success is Dell's direct-to-customer business model, enabling the company to maximize its ability to meet customer expectations while avoiding the unnecessary time and costs associated with retailers or other resellers. To Dell, the Internet is the purest and most efficient form of the direct model, providing greater convenience and efficiency to customers and, in turn, to Dell. To Dell, "direct" refers to the company's relationships with its customers, from home PC users to the world's largest corporations. Approximately one-third of Dell's U. S. 28 billion in annual revenues is achieved through the company's Home and Small Business (HSB) Division, with the remainder generated from sales to medium and large businesses and institutional customers. HSB also maintains ownership of Dell's online accessories store, which offers users a complete selection of nearly 30, 000 competitively priced software and peripheral products from leading manufacturers, carefully selected to complement Dell's systems. Business Challenge As a premier system provider to many other e-commerce companies, Dell strongly believes in using the products it recommends and sells.

Toward this end, Dell traditionally has relied on Microsoft Site Server 3.0 Commerce Edition (SSCE) to provide significant portions of the e-commerce functionality needed for Dell's complex Web site. " Site Server 3.0 provided great shopping cart and checkout functionality along with other benefits, but we were still looking for ways to improve performance and get closer to our customers," says Gregg Hansen, Development Manager for Dell HSB. " Specifically, we wanted the ability to implement campaigns and use coupons.

This presented challenges due to the heterogeneous environment we had in place, with commerce functionality provided by SSCE, customer data residing in a third-party CRM solution, and a mixed bag of applications used to mine the data. " Solution To improve performance and facilitate complex online marketing campaigns, Dell decided to upgrade from Microsoft Site Server to Commerce Server 2000. The company took a phased approach, first upgrading to Commerce Server to achieve greater performance and stability, followed by implementation of the new functionality it provided that would improve the company's e-marketing capabilities. The ' componentized' nature of Commerce Server 2000 allowed us to easily break the project into phases," says Hansen. " Phase one consisted of upgrading the platform before the holiday lockdown, with phase two focused on implementing the new functionality provided by Commerce Server 2000 to improve our campaign capabilities. "

- Phase 1: Greater Performance and Stability; Enhanced Management Capabilities After phase one, consisting primarily of the platform

upgrade from Site Server to Commerce Server 2000, Dell saw significant performance improvements in the areas of shopping cart management and user checkout. We took advantage of the improved Commerce Server 2000 platform to increase performance by up to 100 percent in some areas,” says Hansen. “ While our upgrade to Windows 2000 last year resulted in much better stability and performance, migrating from SSCE to Commerce Server 2000 has led to additional improvements in these areas—something I attribute to the elimination of memory leaks and better use of the platform’s core objects. As a result, the servers no longer require the amount of attention that they used to. ” The platform upgrade also provided Dell with significant benefits in the area of system administration and management. The new management functionality in Commerce Server 2000 has enabled us to move away from a server-by-server management environment to a more centralized one,” says Hansen. “ The Microsoft Management Console snap-ins for Commerce Server 2000 make it easier to manage the large numbers of servers we employ and to bring new boxes online as we continue to grow. ”

- Phase 2: Comprehensive Campaign Management In phase two of the project, Dell took advantage of the extensive new prebuilt functionality in Commerce Server 2000 to enable targeted marketing campaigns. Using the new components in Commerce Server 2000, we were able to implement the functionality needed to build the concept of a campaign, tie it to a discount, and enforce it—all with just six weeks’ development time,” says Hansen. “ Had we tried to do it on our own

and build this functionality from scratch, it would have taken six months. ” As part of this effort, Dell created a custom Commerce Server 2000 Business Process Pipeline (BPP) component to handle coupons created for each campaign. “ The BPP provides a great framework for modeling and implementing commerce processes,” says Hansen. Its plug-in architecture makes it highly flexible and extensible, enabling us to achieve the overall functionality we need by combining out-of-the-box pipeline components with others that are either internally developed or purchased from a third party. Pipeline performance has also been greatly increased over the previous version, resulting in better than 100 percent increases in some areas. ” To allow business users to easily implement campaigns, Dell uses the Commerce Server 2000 Business Desk. “ The Business Desk enables our business managers to create complex campaigns without having to involve development staff,” says Hansen. We created extensions to the Business Desk that enable users to interact with our third-party CRM system to import lists of customers for a campaign. They can use the expression builder to define the campaign rules and create the coupons, which are then passed back to the CRM system for the e-mail campaign. When these customers are driven to the site, the new Commerce Server 2000 functionality we’ve implemented tracks the users, enforces the campaign rules, and calculates the appropriate discounts. ”

## **Moving Forward with Commerce Server 2000**

With Dell's new campaign management system now in production, Hansen is looking at other Commerce Server 2000 features to further enhance the company's online marketing capabilities. " We're looking at the Commerce Server 2000 Targeting System to make product recommendations based on real-time customer behavior, which should significantly improve our ability to cross-sell additional items," says Hansen. " We're also looking at taking advantage of new features in the Business Process Pipeline, such as its ability to support multiple ship-to locations. Why Dell Chose Commerce Server 2000 Dell selected Microsoft Commerce Server 2000 because it provided extensive out-of-the-box functionality that easily could be integrated into the existing complex environment. " We looked at several other products, but Commerce Server 2000 was the easiest to extend and get into production," says Hansen. " The greatest benefits provided by Commerce Server 2000 are its extensive out-of-the-box functionality combined with a flexible component-based architecture that can be easily extended. With just six weeks of development, we were able to customize and integrate its prebuilt functionality into our existing environment, resulting in better performance, improved stability, and extensive new campaign management capabilities. "

### **Solution Overview Profile**

By upgrading to Commerce Server 2000, Dell was able to improve performance in some areas by up to 100 percent. The flexible, component-based architecture of Commerce Server enabled Dell to use only the functionality the company needed and made it easy to extend the product

where needed to meet the company's specific business needs. The greatest benefits provided by Commerce Server 2000 are its extensive out-of-the-box functionality combined with a flexible component-based architecture that can be easily extended. With just six weeks of development, we were able to customize and integrate its prebuilt functionality into our existing environment, resulting in better performance, improved stability, and extensive new campaign management capabilities. " Gregg Hansen Development Manager Dell HSB Microsoft Commerce Server 2000 Customer Solution Using the new components in Commerce Server 2000, we were able to implement functionality to build the concept of a campaign, tie it to a discount, and enforce it—all with just six weeks' development time. Had we tried to do it on our own and build this functionality from scratch, it would have taken six months. " Gregg Hansen Development Manager Dell HSB. NET Enterprise Servers are Microsoft's comprehensive family of server applications for building, deploying, and managing next-generation, integrated Web experiences that move beyond today's world of stand-alone Web sites. Designed with mission-critical performance in mind, the . NET Enterprise Servers provide fast time-to-market as well as scalability, reliability, and manageability for the global, Web-enabled enterprise. They have been built from the ground up for interoperability using open Web standards such as the Extensible Markup Language (XML). The . NET Enterprise Servers are a key part of Microsoft's broader . NET strategy, which will enable a distributed computing model for the Internet based on Internet protocols and standards in order to revolutionize the way computers talk to one another on our behalf.