

LANSA Case Study

Nobilis evolves eCommerce Web site with LANSA

Nobilis is an internationally famous French designer and manufacturer of fabrics, carpets, wall coverings and furniture sold to the world's most prestigious clientele by 200 partners worldwide. A LANSA customer for over eight years, Nobilis used LANSA for the Web to evolve its corporate Web site into an exhaustive online multilingual catalog. A B2B Extranet now gives the company's subsidiaries and business partners real-time access to stock levels and order status.

NOBILIS
P A R I S

Franck Papon, Nobilis' head of engineering for studies and production in the IT department, says, "LANSA offers the speed and ease of development a small IT team needs to be proactive. LANSA for the Web let us develop Internet extensions that capitalize on the company's existing system with both power and ease."

A Trust Built on a Long-term Association

For more than eight years, Nobilis has trusted the development tools offered by LANSA, as Papon explains. "The architecture of the firm's IT system is built on the iSeries."

"Almost all of the applications used by Nobilis, with the exception of payroll, are in-house developments. This includes commercial administration, purchasing, invoicing and reminders, general accounting, administration of stocks, cutting of fabrics, freight and statistics. The LANSA tools were ideal to help us in our work."

"While we are a small team of four people, we look after all of Nobilis' information technology. This is where we find the primary advantage of the LANSA product set — speed and ease of development. These are essential elements for a small team. We must be able to do things very fast."

"Another advantage is the freedom LANSA's development tools provide. For example, we have to modify the process through which orders are captured every four months or so. A solution built around an ERP package would not give as much flexibility, or it would be much too expensive."

Nobilis Evolves its Web Site with LANSA

Capitalizing on this trust born of a long-term use of LANSA tools, Nobilis naturally turned towards LANSA for the Web when developing its Internet site.

"Nobilis started its Web adventure in 2001 with a simple non-interactive corporate Web site that was not linked

"The catalog was an immediate success. Clients, partners and distributors love it."

to the company's IT systems," continues Papon. "We developed the site with the tools we had in-house."

"From the growing number of daily Web hits, it became evident that this medium was generating more business. We realized that the Web site's secondary advantage was that it represented a real return on investment. Its evolution towards new Internet services was the natural way forward."

Nobilis naturally turned towards LANSA to offer new Internet services including B2B services for subsidiaries, importers and distributors. With LANSA for the Web, after less than a month of development, Nobilis produced its first online electronic catalog presenting its total furniture range.

"It was an immediate success, not only did our clients love it, so did our partners and distributors, who now use the Web site as a reference tool," says Papon.

"This Web catalog turned out to be better, by the way, than the paper version especially as far as technical descriptions of products are concerned. The Web site also has an advantage over paper in terms of cost."

Encouraged by the success of the Web furniture catalog application, Nobilis then undertook the development of



the fabric catalog.

"The next step will be the development of a catalog presenting all our wall and floor coverings," says Papon.

B2B Services Offered to Partners

LANSA for the Web allows integration directly between the Internet site and Nobilis' core production systems so Nobilis' Web extensions were not limited to the catalogs.

Using LANSA for the Web, a B2B Extranet was created for Nobilis' distribution partners that allows registered users real-time access to stock details, such as product availability and re-order dates. Partners can also follow up on the status of their orders online.

"This type of service complements the traditional tools utilized by our clients and partners for these transactions, the fax and the phone."

"The Web site answers a real need for our overseas distributors. The cost of communication becomes negligible for them and the time difference between countries disappears," continues Papon. "It is even possible from the site to track orders while they are in transit with DHL".

LANSA's multilingual support means the same Web application supports users in different countries in their native language.

Even before the implementation of new services such as the facility to order directly on the Nobilis Web site, partners were already sold on the idea.

"The site's main advantage for us is the ability to check our suppliers' stock levels in real time," comments **Daniella van Egmond**, office manager with Vilhelmine Van Aerssen, Nobilis' exclusive distributor in The Netherlands.

"The electronic catalog is also a plus, since it lets us improve our relationship with our clients and satisfy their needs faster and in a more interactive manner," says van Egmond.

Company and System Information

- Located in St. Germain des Prés, in Paris, Nobilis is an internationally famous designer and manufacturer of fabrics, carpets, wallpapers, sofas and other furniture. Founded in 1928, Nobilis is a family company operating via approximately 200 partners worldwide. In 1980, Nobilis expanded by opening subsidiary companies, show rooms and a network of retailers in Europe, the United States and the Middle East.
- Nobilis' current collection, including its furniture catalog, 3,000 lines of fabric, carpet, soft furnishings and trimmings, as well as more than 2,500 different wall papers and wall coverings are aimed at up-market customers, about whom the firm remains extremely discreet, as they are part of the worlds most prestigious clientele. For more information visit: www.nobilis.fr
- Nobilis has seven iSeries machines. A model 170 is used for development and Web serving. The others iSeries machines are application servers.
- The Nobilis B2C Web site is completely integrated with Nobilis' back-office system and shares item pricing, stock availability, customer and tracking information.
- Nobilis' data-processing subsidiary company, Cybco, manages all systems and infrastructure with a staff of four people.
- This article has been translated from the original French version published in 2004.

"The primary advantage of LANSA is speed and ease of development."

A Secure Solution Capitalizing on Existing Investments

Since the beginning of Nobilis' Web adventure, the natural choice of LANSA for the Web has never been doubted by the company's development teams.

"The quality of LANSA for the Web is up there with the best, as is the rest of what's on offer from LANSA," says Papon.

"LANSA for the Web allows us to do complete and fast development, since it is built on the same development principles as LANSA for the iSeries."

"However, while the RDML development language is the same, we are nevertheless talking about a totally different tool, offering new functionality. The product is very flexible and offers a solution to every problem," concludes Papon.

As well as leveraging their existing development tool set, Nobilis did not have to invest in new hardware. All that was required to support their Web solution was the reallocation of an existing iSeries as the Web server and to host the development environment.

As well as providing additional savings, the iSeries is also, and most importantly, a security guarantee. By its very nature, an iSeries system hosting a Web server is much better protected from possible outside attacks than a UNIX or Windows Web server.

With LANSA, Nobilis is working in a constant environment and puts to profitable use all the expertise derived from years of experience with the LANSA tool set. Capitalizing on what was already there allows the company to save development time and as such to save money.



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