

Set for the Future

Sky IT Group and the IBM® @server® iSeries™ dish up e-business on demand for a leading table linen company.



Like the well set tables it covers, Bardwil Industries is a master of design.

From humble beginnings in 1906, Bardwil has sewed up a leading position among America's manufacturers of tabletop and kitchen fashions, selling its own brand as well as other leading names. Its founders, who immigrated to America as traveling salesmen, originally imported linens and lace from Europe. Nearly a century later, a third-generation Bardwil oversees a staff that travels the world for the latest fashions in home furnishings.

Once content to run a traditional wholesale business, Bardwil recently laid out a leading edge strategy to invite another market to its table – consumers. Now Bardwil leverages technology as its stitch in time, serving up speed and quality in both the business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) markets.

“From my point of view, it's not enough to take orders over the Web, if you can't flow them back to your data center, warehouse and out the back door,” says Charles Gaenslen, Bardwil's Chief Financial Officer. “We wanted the front end to integrate seamlessly into our back-end systems.”

Bardwil turned to Sky IT Group, an IBM Premier Business Partner, for a solution. In conjunction with development partner Ritesys®, Sky IT enabled Bardwil's enterprise resource planning (ERP) system for e-business on an IBM eServer iSeries platform. The result has been a far more effective sales force and a strong entry into an entirely new revenue stream - at minimal cost.

“Sky IT helped Bardwil excel in both the B2B and B2C marketplaces. With their e-business solution running on the new IBM @server iSeries, Bardwil is now delivering top-notch service to their retail customers and in return getting a new source of additional revenue. A nice move for a company almost a 100 years old.”

Joel Knudson, IBM Sales Executive, iSeries Large Enterprises



“It’s hard to beat the reliability. As a data server, and an applications server, there’s really nothing an iSeries can’t do.”

– Charles Gaenslen, Chief Financial Officer, Bardwil Industries

Sky IT helps Bardwil serve B2B and B2C markets

The business world is littered with companies that jumped to the Web without having the systems of their own house in order. Bardwil was determined to do it differently. Having invested in a well-functioning ERP system, complete with integrated back-end processes, Bardwil’s move to the Web would definitely stand out.

“For a small-to-medium sized company, Bardwil is extremely automated,” says Jay Hakami, President of Sky IT. “They have to satisfy, extremely well, the demands of their big retail customers, who want to deal with a quality organization, view their specific data on demand, eliminate telephone tag and receive the very best service.”

Satisfying retailers

One objective of the solution was to improve service within Bardwil’s traditional wholesaling business. For better inventory control, accuracy and speed of service, Bardwil wanted to make critical elements of its business applications available to its sales force.

“We wanted our sales reps to get a variety of views on order status, and be able to book orders at any time,” explains Mr. Gaenslen. “The information had to be accessible through a browser, so they could dial in from anywhere, with no software required on their PCs. They also needed the ability to create electronic catalogs on the fly, picking and choosing, then e-mailing, the styles and colors suited to their customers.”

Bardwil’s core applications, including its ERP and warehouse management applications were all running on an IBM AS/400°. “The migration to an iSeries was a natural since the AS/400 was an outstanding performer for us,” notes Mr. Gaenslen. “Reliability is key for us. As a data server, and an applications server, there’s really nothing an iSeries can’t do.”

With services and resources dedicated to the IBM platform, Sky IT was an attractive choice for Bardwil. “We had every confidence that with Sky IT, we’d get the specifications we wanted at a competitive price,” says Mr. Gaenslen.

“We understand the meaning of e-business on demand as well as Bardwil’s business environment,” adds Mr. Hakami, “from the web interface and front end objectives through to the back-end legacy systems. Our customers recognize we are skilled at translating business requirements into technical solutions with ROI in mind.”

In this case, it resulted in an iSeries running Sky eBusiness™ software, which is built on IBM WebSphere®, for a complete e-business on demand solution. Getting all the core applications installed and tested took less than 60 days. “The service from Sky was excellent throughout,” says Mr. Gaenslen.

IBM Business Partner:	Sky IT Group
Solutions:	IBM @server iSeries, Server Consolidation, Data Warehousing, Business Intelligence, WebSphere®
Service:	Eastern United States
Customer Target:	Apparel, Manufacturing, Distribution, Retail, Cross Industry

Empowering sales reps and buyers

Now, Bardwil’s sales reps are more self-sufficient, accessing information anytime, anywhere.

“We know calls to our order desk are down and that’s saving us money, but frankly, we didn’t go into this with a specific dollar savings in mind,” says Mr. Gaenslen. “We wanted to make our sales reps more effective so they could provide better value to retailers

and outrun the competition. We do so much business with these big retailers that the retention of even just one or two accounts pays for the solution.” Buyers at retail companies can also inquire directly into Bardwil’s system over the web to check on the real-time status of their orders.

The B2C aspect of the solution was especially compelling. Ingeniously, Bardwil’s investment in serving its retailers has empowered the company to market directly to consumers. “We already had the back-end office systems to handle EDI orders,” says Mr. Gaenslen, “so we simply got our ERP system to translate the consumer orders into the equivalent.”

Serving consumers

Over the Web, consumers can now select from drop-down menus that display only in-stock items. Completed consumer orders drop into the warehouse management systems as an aggregated master customer account, to be dealt with as all other orders. When they are picked together in waves throughout the day, it marks the first human intervention the consumer orders have required. Orders received in the morning are shipped the same day.

“By taking advantage of our back-end, we’ve opened up a brand new B2C business for a very small incremental cost,” says Mr. Gaenslen. “That’s what gets me most excited.”

In the first year, Bardwil racked up \$100,000 in consumer sales; it’s expected to hit \$350,000 in Year Two. Within those two years, Bardwil estimates that its B2C investment will have more than paid off, and everything after will be icing on the cake.

As for the future, Bardwil may turn the tables and extend its newfound e-business capabilities to suppliers throughout Asia.

One hundred years after its founding, Bardwil is still keeping the linen market well-covered.

For additional information on how **Sky IT Group** can help your organization, contact us at **866-SKY-3500** or visit our Web site at **www.skyitgroup.com**

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