

Oracle E-Commerce Applications

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EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

E-commerce is—or should be—a critical part of virtually every business’s strategy for growth and high profitability. Within an e-business, e-commerce functionality encompasses the processes of buying and selling online, and enables more personalized and cost-effective ways of marketing and providing customer service. Because e-commerce is most effective when it’s integrated with the rest of your e-business, Oracle E-Commerce applications provide both e-commerce functionality and help you fully mesh e-commerce transactions, processes, and information with your business’s other information systems.

INTRODUCTION

The widespread adoption of e-commerce is reflected in the phenomenal expansion of the e-commerce marketplace, projected to grow from US\$40 billion today to \$850 billion by 2003, according to the research organization International Data Corporation. And as e-commerce becomes a central part of your business, its integration with the rest of your business becomes even more critical. Oracle E-Commerce applications integrate smoothly with other Oracle applications, plus legacy, front-office, and back-office systems to ensure that your internet-based activities are informed by and connected to other sources of information within your business. Plus, they scale readily to continue delivering excellent response despite the unpredictable nature of online demand. High levels of scalability and integration make all Oracle E-Commerce applications ideal for enterprises with global operations.

Oracle E-Commerce applications are integrated with Oracle’s Interaction Centers to bring a new level of interactivity and a personal touch to your Web presence. They use Cisco ICM software to fuse Web, voice, and collaboration technology into a single, seamless platform for managing customer interaction channels. Whether an interaction takes place using e-mail, telephony, fax, or the Web, it can draw on other Oracle E-Commerce and E-Business Suite applications to leverage centralized customer information and business application functionality.

Oracle E-Commerce applications deliver proven, scalable, easy-to-implement solutions that allow you to

- Provide high-quality service economically for greater customer loyalty
- Integrate your channels for more complete understanding of the customer
- Personalize the shopping experience for maximum per-customer profitability

“IDC estimates that the E-Commerce applications market will grow 175% to \$5 billion in 2000 and \$10 billion in 2001. IDC projects that by 2004, the market will top \$23 billion at a compound annual growth rate of 66%.”--IDC

PROVIDE HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE

Retaining customers is far less expensive, and more profitable, than acquiring new ones. Studies have shown that providing excellent customer service is the most effective way of keeping customers—but providing such service through traditional means can be very costly. It doesn't have to be: Oracle E-Commerce applications enable your business to take advantage of opportunities to offer excellent service while reducing costs and improving efficiency, often by providing self-service access to internal and customer-facing processes. They include all the pre-integrated, packaged applications you need to provide self-service access to your selling, servicing, financial, and purchasing processes. Oracle E-Commerce applications help you leverage the Web to provide expert configuration assistance, price your products and services dynamically, answer customer requests, collaborate with your customers, and open a new, e-mail-based channel of communication.

Put Your Expertise Online

If you're selling products or services that can be configured, you may have relied on salespeople to evaluate each customer's needs and preferences and map them to your product set. Oracle E-Commerce applications automate the configuration process, enabling you to sell even highly complex configurable products over the Web with confidence. The applications capture customer requirements through an interactive process, and then use that information to drive the configuration of an optimal solution for the customer. At every step, the applications check on the validity and pricing of each choice and on current product availability.

Buy It or Sell It, Your Way

The real-time nature of e-commerce makes it easy to assess demand dynamically and price items accordingly through auctions. Oracle E-Commerce applications support global, online marketplaces in which participants can buy and sell all types of goods and services at the best value. E-Commerce applications also facilitate the processing of requisitions, purchase orders, RFQs, quotations, and receipts quickly and efficiently. Simple Web browsers make it easy for novice and experienced customers to find the goods and services they need and checkout their purchases.

This real-time information has strategic value, too: Suppliers can leverage it to reduce inventory and the time and cost of supplying goods. Market participants can collaborate for better product design, more efficient interactions, and reduced cost of sales and marketing.

Answer Customer Requests

Oracle E-Commerce applications offer your business a variety of ways to respond to customer requests. If a customer visiting your site has an immediate issue, that person can collaborate with customer support in real-time through VOIP, chat, and co-browsing, or click on a call-me button, which flags the request to an agent in your call center, along with all the background history of the transaction, including real-time online order status and inventory, plus current and past transactions such as order history, invoices, and payments. With this complete information at hand, the agent can call the customer immediately to discuss and resolve the issue.

Not every request has to be addressed by an agent in real time. Oracle E-Commerce applications can help your business realize significant savings on customer support/call center activity by giving you the option to reallocate common requests to the Web for knowledge base searches and automated response mechanisms. Customers can check the status of their orders, enter and modify service requests, participate in forums, and view transaction history and status. Most customers appreciate the convenience of being able to do so at any time, without having to rely on an agent.

Collaborate with Your Customers on an Ongoing Basis

You can use the Web as an inexpensive channel for keeping in regular contact with your customers and collaborating with them on a variety of issues. Customers can choose to subscribe to information and receive it over the Web or by e-mail. Your business can also use the Web or e-mail to notify customers of important information, such as recalls or upgrades. You can also easily set up online interactive forums for your customers to participate in, to build a sense of community and increase their identification with your business. Those forums and Web sites enable you to collaborate actively with your customers, exchanging information, predictions, and suggestions in a way that helps you create better products, lower transaction costs, reduce inventories, use resources more effectively, and speed time to market.

Make the Most of E-mail

E-mail enables you to support customer service and marketing activities for a fraction of the traditional cost. Oracle E-Commerce applications provide easy e-mail access for Web users: If they want to communicate with your business by using e-mail, they can simply fill out a form on a Web page, rather than having to start up their e-mail application. The workflows associated with each Web form can fully automate the resolution of and response to the request by accessing customer data as well as business process functionality available through other Oracle CRM applications. The application also deals with unstructured inbound e-mails, providing automated responses or suggesting responses to a human agent who can then compose a reply with a click of the mouse.

Oracle e-mail support also includes automation for execution and closed-loop management of outbound interactions and campaigns. Its browser-based interface for e-mail processing enhances agent productivity, and it offers real-time monitoring and management capabilities for supervisors. Managers can use it to keep track of e-mail activities by viewing reports and performing analysis.

INTEGRATE YOUR CHANNELS

Only Oracle provides a comprehensive family of proven enterprise-wide e-commerce applications that share data across interaction channels for truly synchronized information. These applications help bring together everything you know about a customer to provide a complete, accurate, and real-time understanding of that customer's relationship with your business—an understanding you can leverage to solve issues or increase sales. Whether you're using Oracle's customizable e-commerce functionality as an extension to your current sales channels, or as a new way of providing service or streamlining procurement processes, this synchronization empowers you to leverage everything you know about a customer when you're dealing with them, regardless of their chosen contact channel: e-mail, Web, in person, or over the phone.

All Oracle E-Commerce applications can be used as excellent standalone solutions, but what sets them apart from competing products is their integration. Oracle E-Commerce applications interact seamlessly with your Oracle back-office applications, other back-office systems such as SAP applications, and Oracle customer-facing applications, such as Oracle Interaction Center applications. When used together these applications provide a 360-degree view of each customer, improve your business's efficiency, and coordinate with back-office functions.

Get a Complete Picture of Your Customers

With Oracle's E-Commerce applications, your company can use the Web to round out its view of each customer with full customer demographics, preferences, buying patterns, and purchase history from online interactions. All this information comes in real time, so you can respond with personalized customer care to issues at the moment they're important to your customers. You can see, close-up and in real-time, how your customers are reacting to your new products or new campaigns, increasing your ability to target sales and marketing activities. As a result, your business can develop one-to-one relationships with its business or consumer customers, personalize product and service offerings, and provide information on the products and services your customers are most likely to want, when they want it.

Improve Your Business's Efficiency

Integrating Oracle E-Commerce applications with your business brings benefits to your business as a whole. Web-based ordering simplifies your supply chain and enables your business to capture demand in real-time. This, in turn, can reduce inventory carrying costs and the quantity of change orders. Back-office integration helps streamline distribution channels and shorten product-delivery cycles to bring a time-to-market advantage.

Coordinate with Back-Office Functions

Integration with current systems enables your Oracle-based Web store to benefit from your existing accounts receivable and order and inventory management solutions. Oracle E-Commerce applications use workflow-based processing, so you can use your own business processing while saving carts, submitting orders, registering customers, and submitting postorder inquiries.

PERSONALIZE THE BUYING PROCESS

With the marketplace more competitive than ever, the old-fashioned touch of personalization is more important than ever. When you demonstrate a precise and individual knowledge of customers, they will feel that you know who they are and care about their needs—and you will be able to sell them more by correctly analyzing and anticipating their requirements.

Oracle E-Commerce applications help you create this win-win relationship by gathering implicit and explicit information about your customers' preferences, buying and servicing patterns, and interaction history, and combining that information with other enterprise data. Armed with this data and analysis, plus the Oracle E-Commerce applications' ability to identify unique visitors and sessions, you can personalize customers' Web experiences, segmenting customer categories and creating rule-driven, context-specific campaign displays. These new abilities offer your organization's marketing experts a wealth of new ways to mix e-marketing and traditional techniques to enhance shopping, improve merchandising, increase online revenues, and extend brand presence.

Enhance Shopping

The Oracle solution enhances shopping with guided selling (recommendations based on observation of the customer), methods for quick checkout, buy-this-instead suggestions when an item is out of stock, and affiliate link tracking for setting up links outside the store that link directly back to an in-store location without going through the home page. Additionally, customers can save carts for later retrieval at their convenience or share carts when purchases involve multiple people in the approval process, and create shopping lists for repeat items. The application ensures that any relevant promotions are applied seamlessly during the purchase process.

Because Oracle E-Commerce applications are designed to meet the needs of businesses and consumers, they enable a wide range of payment options to suit various customer categories. Customers can be individuals or organizations and can have multiple accounts (for example, one account for business use and another for home use, or separate accounts for each department or individual within a company). Out-of-the-box integration with leading payment vendors such as CyberCash and CheckFree, plus integration with other Oracle solutions, enables customers to choose from a variety of payment processing choices, from credit cards and electronic funds transfer to purchase orders and leasing options—while you deploy predefined risk instruments to verify their identity and assess their risk rating. Customers can handle their own registration and administration details for maximum accuracy. And because Oracle E-Commerce applications support multiple languages and currencies, you can use them as your company's e-commerce solution worldwide.

Improve Merchandising

Extensive product catalog, content management, and presentation capabilities give you the flexibility to present your products in your own way. Although the application draws on information in the Oracle Inventory system, you can present products differently on your Web site, defining product hierarchies in new ways and highlighting special featured items or product bundles. You can even present the same product catalog in several different “special interest stores”, each with its

own look and feel. Flexible display formats enable you to display content on alternate browsers, such as mobile devices. Oracle E-Commerce applications integrate with Oracle Configurator to let users configure their own complex products and to guide users through product selection. Oracle Configurator also enables you to display related support services, such as extended warranties, along with products to help maximize your sales and customer satisfaction.

Increase Online Revenues

Analysts report purchase/visit ratios of less than 10 percent on many sites, suggesting tremendous scope for improving online revenue through appropriate targeting of Web-based promotional and advertising strategies. Oracle E-Commerce applications provide sophisticated offer-definition and execution capabilities, so you can create a wide variety of flexible across-channel promotion and volume discount mechanisms to turn shoppers into buyers and increase the number of items they purchase. Intelligence applications analyze clickstreams to provide information on visitor interactions with your Web site so you can assess site performance, evaluate effectiveness—and, ultimately, attract and retain profitable customers.

Extend Your Brand Presence to Other Sites

Establishing a brand through other sites and attracting traffic to the store from other sites is becoming increasingly important in today's crowded e-marketplace. Oracle E-Commerce applications help you create, manage, personalize, and execute multiple types of Web-based campaigns, including ads, surveys, banners, and affiliate links. It offers tools that help you manage and personalize campaigns on advertiser sites and manage publishers' ad banner campaigns on your own site.

ORACLE INTEGRATES E-COMMERCE WITH YOUR BUSINESS

“The FastForward Web store solution will enable us to reach new customers and extend the benefits of electronic commerce to our dealers—a must in today’s competitive e-business environment.”—Ron Pollard, CIO, Specialized Bicycle Components

Oracle E-Commerce applications tie your internet presence to your front-office and back-office systems to ensure that your internet-based activities are informed by and connected to other sources of information within your business. They help you provide high-quality service economically for greater customer loyalty, integrate your channels for more complete understanding of the customer, and personalize the shopping experience for maximum per-customer profitability.

To help your company become highly effective as an e-business, Oracle offers more than applications: It provides a wealth of ongoing consulting, support, partnership, and education options for a complete solution.

Applications in the Oracle E-Commerce Family

Oracle Exchange

Oracle Exchange marketplace enables companies and individuals to buy and sell all types of goods in transactions ranging from complex auctions of configured goods to high-velocity, repetitive purchases of frequently used items. It helps you to collaborate with customers and suppliers in real time to deliver low-cost, higher-quality products and services to the market faster and more efficiently.

Oracle iProcurement

iProcurement makes it easy for customers to requisition products and services. Part of Oracle’s complete procure-to-pay solution, it helps take care of the details of the procurement process so that you can focus on developing strategic relationships and managing the effectiveness of the process as a whole.

Oracle iStore

iStore enables companies to build, manage, and personalize powerful and scalable internet storefronts for selling products in a secure and personalized environment. It can be used in business-to-business as well as business-to-consumer settings to provide complete order and inventory management. iStore includes iMarketing, an internet marketing application that helps you create and personalize offers, recommendations, and ads to increase online revenues and build customer loyalty. It also helps you extend your company’s brand presence to other sites.

Oracle iPayment

iPayment is a complete electronic payment processing solution for application developers, systems integrators, and enterprises that need to payment-enable new or existing internet or client/server e-commerce applications.

Oracle iReceivables—

Oracle iReceivables is an internet-based credit and collection solution that is fully integrated with Oracle Receivables, enabling your customers and employees to use a standard Web browser to perform extensive online inquiries, reprint invoices, dispute bills, and review current account balances.

Oracle iSupport

iSupport is a comprehensive, Web-based customer-care system that enables merchants to proactively provide customer support in a self-service environment. Implementing iSupport empowers companies to reduce the cost of providing service, while increasing customer satisfaction and gaining an edge over competitors.

Oracle eMail Center

eMail Center provides businesses inbound customer support email interaction management as well as outbound sales and marketing email processing. It handles free-form or Web form emails and provides automatic responses or suggested responses to a call center agent for follow-up.

Oracle Clickstream Intelligence

Oracle Clickstream Intelligence provides businesses with analysis of Web site performance, visitor traffic, effectiveness of Web content, and customer loyalty. Oracle Clickstream Intelligence is a part of Oracle 9i AS.

Oracle Customer Intelligence

Customer Intelligence provides a fully integrated solution for gathering customer information from every touchpoint in the enterprise. It provides decision-makers with the detailed analytical tools to identify the most value-added customers and enables organizations to tailor product and service offerings to suit different customer types through detailed customer profitability, retention, and lifecycle analyses.

Oracle Configurator

Oracle Configurator provides guided selling and configuration capabilities for companies that sell complex and custom products and services. Businesses can integrate it seamlessly into custom Web-based applications to capture customer requirements and generate an optimal configuration for the customer.

Oracle Interaction Center

Interaction Center supports customer interactions across multiple channels, including inbound and outbound telephony, Web, and e-mail communications. Oracle's Interaction Center also works with Cisco ICM software to provide a single seamless platform for managing these different customer interaction channels along with VOIP, chat, and Web collaboration capabilities. Oracle Interaction Center is the E-Business Suite product family that supports multimedia customer interactions.

ORACLE E-COMMERCE APPLICATIONS: PART OF THE COMPREHENSIVE ORACLE E-BUSINESS SUITE

Oracle E-Commerce family of applications is a component of the Oracle E-Business Suite, which lets you put your entire customer management, supply chain, and internal operations online. Oracle E-Business Suite uses an internet computing architecture that lets you expand markets, improve efficiencies, and retain customers.

Because they are part of a unique and comprehensive E-Business Suite, Oracle E-Commerce applications integrate your e-commerce activities with the rest of your business. These integrated applications, and their ability to provide a 360-degree view of customers and their interactions with your business, help make your Web-based business more profitable by increasing transaction volumes, revenues, and loyalty, while decreasing transaction costs, operation costs, and shopping cart abandonment. They also help you grow your business by expanding your ability to address broader markets and reach new customers.

The Next Step

For more information on becoming an e-business, visit www.oracle.com/applications. In addition to providing more information on Oracle E-Commerce applications and other products in the Oracle E-Business Suite, the site also features case studies, information on services, demos, and the opportunity to learn what customers are saying. If you prefer, you can also call your local Oracle office, or call +1.800.Oracle1.



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