



CRIMSONWING

better people : better business

ECI & Cosmox
Case Study

better people : better business

... at ECI & Cosmox

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Email: sales@crimsonwing.com

www.crimsonwing.com

The Project

In 2006, the Netherlands' largest book retailer ECI, who sells thousands of items online as well as offline, approached Crimsonwing to consult them on the performance of their website, as well as to integrate the Intershop based Fredhopper search tool on their site and to build a number of bespoke IT solutions around their existing eCommerce platform which is based on the Intershop Enfinity platform. The project called "All Media" was aimed to facilitate the online shopping experience and to improve ECI's business performance.

Client Information

ECI, a subsidiary of the Bertelsmann AG Direct Group, was set up in 1967, with the ambition to promote reading across the country. ECI has achieved this goal in two ways. Firstly, by keeping the book prices competitively low and secondly, by building a strong relationship with their members through various loyalty programs. ECI is the largest book club in the Netherlands with 1 million members. Today, apart from books, ECI also offers products such as music, movies and games in their catalogue. Apart from online shopping and mail order, ECI has over 30 shops in the Netherlands, selling around 3,500 titles from their own catalogue and 60,000 from those of affiliate partners, who sell ECI's products through their own websites. Apart from their main book club, ECI BV also operates other clubs in the Netherlands and the Dutch-speaking areas of Belgium, called the "Nederlandse BoekenClub", the "CDVD Entertainment Club" and a publishing company called "The House of Books".

Background & Requirements

ECI wished to expand its business on all fronts, so they asked Crimsonwing to assist them to enhance the performance of their existing site, and integrate their eCommerce website with Intershop's Enfinity solution. Crimsonwing also assisted ECI with incorporating the affiliate partners' functionality within their website. This meant creating a platform through which customers could order ECI products as well as the ones from the affiliate partners. ECI's affiliates are the companies who sell ECI's products through their own website.

ECI was already using Intershop as their eCommerce solution. Intershop provides eBusiness platforms and has been driving and supporting the development of online retailing since 1992 and thus possesses unparalleled eCommerce experience. In the earlier days, the eCommerce platform was mainly used for club members to post orders. Today, eCommerce is more of a strategic marketing tool for a multi-channel approach to sell media products like books, CDs and DVDs to their target audience. Besides the ECI Book Club labels, ECI operates an open, non-commitment channel called Cosmox.

Crimsonwing was asked to assist ECI on a couple of projects. The first one involved our consultancy services where we assessed the performance of the site and its integration of the Fredhopper search tool, which is based on the Intershop Enfinity solution. Fredhopper provides enterprise search and merchandising software tailored to the needs of online sales channels. Moreover, Crimsonwing embraced making improvements to the ECI site as well as increasing functionality and ease of use.

Once the integration of the first project was completed and the client satisfied with the results, ECI asked us to carry out the incorporation of the affiliate partners' functionality within the ECI website. Incorporating the affiliate partners' functionality meant that the partner had to be linked to the Cosmox website. In turn, users visiting the Cosmox site from any affiliate partner would be able to see both the affiliate and the Cosmox / ECI products which they could add to their shopping baskets. Naturally, this function requires users to be registered.

The affiliate partner integration provides a powerful, yet easy way to handle the process of registering users who enter the consumer storefront via an affiliate partner site. But besides managing the affiliate partners, channel administrators can also define time-limited partner programs, such as loyalty programs and weekly promotions, which can be carried out by specific affiliate partners. This allows an even more fine-grained tailoring of the offer to the user.



Crimsonwing, a leading international provider of eBusiness and commercial systems solutions, has a strong track record of managing complex, multi-million pound IT projects by developing and implementing leading-edge technology. Since its foundation in 1996, Crimsonwing has set standards for IT development and innovation. The company enjoys a good reputation and a loyal customer base evidenced by repeat business and increasing customer satisfaction.



The Solution

During the process of developing the solution, the CIO of ECI was impressed with the progress and commented: "Crimsonwing is supporting ECI on an important project called "All Media". This will enable ECI to sell any media product from internal stock and also from partners. The product range will cover more than 500,000 items and as such will put a lot of pressure on the implementation of the eCommerce engine. We are confident to be working with a capable and reliable partner such as Crimsonwing."

The solution uses Intershop's Enfinity Suite 6, with multiple web services connecting to an Oracle database. This system also interacts with the Fredhopper search engine. The skills that were required for this project were mainly Enfinity and Java. For each affiliate partner and affiliate program, the system generates a unique URL, which can be allocated to the respective partner site. On the basis of these URLs, users entering the consumer storefront via the affiliate partner site are automatically assigned to a consumer group. As a result of their assignment to consumer groups, each affiliate partner and affiliate program can offer their own promotions and discounts.

For each affiliate partner and each affiliate partner program, the system keeps an access statistics, which consumer channel administrators can view in the back office providing them with a lot more intelligence. These statistics increases visibility about usage and help tracking business performance. It gives insights about:

- Total revenue
- Total of orders
- Number of registered users
- Number of generated storefront hits (sessions)

The project has delivered the following features:

Managing affiliate partners and partner programs to direct users from an affiliate sites to the consumer storefront.

The consumer storefront includes both product ranges, the Cosmox / ECI products and the ones from the respective affiliate partner through which the user has entered the storefront. Therefore, the customer has a greater choice and ECI products achieve greater visibility and reach.

Customisation on consumer registration functionality, i.e. integrating the different login requirements for example that some of the affiliate partners had.

Each affiliate can have its own look and feel to the storefront (style sheet, logos etc).

Customisation on emails, orders and homepage templates is now available for each affiliate partner.

A unique ID is created per affiliate which results in better tracking and reporting.

EAN substitution: this creates a unique article number which facilitates coding for articles.

Pricing is being retrieved from Fredhopper: usually, pricing is stored in ISH itself, but by using this solution and in order to have one combined storefront, the articles from the affiliate partner itself as well as prices had to come from Fredhopper.

Business Benefits

Menno van Manen, ECI's CIO, commented "Crimsonwing proved to be a very reliable partner in various projects e.g. improvements on our current club sites, implementation support for the Cosmox sites (non commitment sales) and implementation support of the search engine Fredhopper."

Apart from the project being delivered efficiently and on time, it enabled ECI to combine external catalogues with their own products. Moreover, it resulted in a better management of the affiliate partners / partner



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programs in order to direct users from affiliate sites to the main consumer storefront. ECI was able to launch a 3rd party sales channel which opens up a new market segment and increases their reach considerably, bringing them closer to their original aim to promote reading across the country. The new solution delivered the following business benefits:

Better segmentation of the market – We created a system whereby every affiliate partner generates a special web address. Each affiliate is now able to introduce its own logos, corporate image etc. on the site. Users are thus able to be targeted according to their particular consumer requirements and interests.

Enhanced management of information – We developed a solution which helps affiliate partners receive information about relevant statistics such as total revenue, number of orders, number of registered users and number of generated storefront hits.

Improved customer relationship management – Users now have the facility to view both the affiliate products and the ECI products. They are notified regularly on weekly promotions and specific customer-related information can be targeted to them. The customisation on the consumer registration ensured a better method of data capture of user information.

Increased sales – The new system allows ECI to sell any media product from internal stock and also from their partners' sites. The product range expanded to over 500,000 items. Customers now benefit from finding

their desired products easily on a single platform, thus making the online shopping experience more pleasant.

About Crimsonwing

Crimsonwing is an international IT solutions provider developing and implementing leading-edge solutions to help European companies to gain a competitive advantage. Crimsonwing offers flexible, cost-effective and proven industry solutions for eCommerce, ERP and fully bespoke applications and integration to meet a client's unique business needs. Whether it involves training or consultancy, design or development, implementation or hosting (SaaS/ASP): Crimsonwing provides flexible services and support across the entire range of activity. Crimsonwing is a growing, profitable and publicly listed company, employing 230 people.

About Intershop

Intershop has a strong track record of innovation and enabling successful online business. As an industry pioneer, Intershop has been driving and supporting the development of online retailing since 1992 and thus possesses unparalleled eCommerce experience. More than 300 enterprise and mid-sized customers around the globe rely on Intershop solutions, including Otto, Quelle, Tchibo, T-Home, Sun Microsystems, Hewlett-Packard, and Bosch. These companies deploy the Infinity Suite 6 software to sell goods and services via the Internet to consumers and business customers or through partners.



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