Case Study:
Amway India

The Challenge

Amway India depends on both a custom-developed ERP application that runs on IBM i and a Windows-based e-commerce platform from Microsoft. The e-commerce suite, which uses Microsoft SQL Server, requires data—such as Amway Business Owner (ABO) order histories and business summary reports—in the ERP's Db2 databases.

E-commerce is an important component of Amway India's growth strategy. Sales through this channel have increased to 31% of the company's business in the past two years. Greater use of e-commerce promises to improve Amway India's profitability because e-commerce lowers the cost of order processing (compared to traditional sales channels).

Data sharing between the ERP and e-commerce applications presented a problem for Amway. In the past, Amway India transferred data between the two systems at intervals that depended on the nature of the data.

Most bulk transfers were done at night to avoid impacting system performance during busy daytime hours. As a result, the e-commerce databases were out of date. While some data was 10 minutes behind the ERP, other data was a day or two old.

Company
Amway India Enterprises Pvt. Ltd.

Headquarters
Gurgaon, India

Industry
Consumer Goods

Business Environment
- Established: 1995
- Employees: 500 full-time
- More than 550,000 active independent Amway Business Owners (ABO)
- Wholly owned subsidiary of US$10.9 billion Amway Corporation

Implementation Team
Amway India, Precisely and Olive Datacentre

> "The time required to replicate data between applications has dropped dramatically. Some data used to take a full day to replicate. Now it's available immediately."
>
> — Harsh Anand, Manager of Groupware and IT Support Services

Solution

After many considerations, Amway India determined that the data replication capabilities of Precisely's data integration offering Connect could best meet its data-sharing requirements. This decision was largely based on:

- The small load the software places on the source and target databases
- The solution's ability to fully automate the cross-platform replication processes
- Amway India's ability to monitor the health of replication processes across all platforms

Connect replicates data changes between databases in real-time. Those databases can use different DBMSs, running on different hardware and operating systems. Connect can also replicate data bi-directionally, so users can apply updates anywhere and ensure current data is available quickly and automatically, regardless of the database platforms.

Amway India uses Connect to replicate data in real-time from its ERP System running on IBM i and Db2 to its e-commerce application running on Windows and SQL Server. It used to take from 10 minutes to over 24 hours for information to be available on the e-commerce database, but now all data is available almost immediately after it is entered or updated.

Prior to the implementation, Amit Talwar, Manager of Business Solutions, noted changes made to ABOs profile through the web site were not available immediately; the ABO had to wait for 24 hours. Post the implementation the changes are available almost immediately.

The availability of real-time data also increased the adoption of e-commerce by existing ABOs. This, in turn, increases profitability because electronic order processing is more cost-effective than other order-processing channels.

Connect replicates changes as they happen. Even though Amway India used to do much of its non-critical bulk copying at night, the company calculates that the reduction of resource usage will extend the life of its computing infrastructure by one year—about 25% of its previous replacement cycle.

Results

- Makes data available immediately on disparate systems
- Allows new Amway Business Owners to begin ordering right away
- Reduces costs by increasing adoption of e-commerce
- Fully automates data sharing, reducing manual workloads
- Infrastructure life extends by 25%

Technologies

Software:
- Connect CDC
- IBM i, Db2
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008 R2,
- SQL Server 2008
- Custom-developed ERP (IBM i)
- E-commerce Platform (Windows & .NET)

Hardware:
- IBM i Series 8202
- Intel-based servers