

Deckers Outdoor Corporation

CLIENT SUCCESS

SNAPSHOT

deckers
OUTDOOR CORPORATION

ORGANIZATION

Founded in 1973, Deckers Outdoor Corp. markets a full line of footwear for outdoor activities and everyday casual lifestyle.

CHALLENGE

Develop a self-service Web application that enables retailers to manage orders from inception to fulfillment while supplying up-to-the minute pricing and availability information.

STRATEGY

Use standard, readily available technologies to create a custom information system that integrates with existing ERP and MRP applications.

SOLUTION

A new information management portal that lets retailers manage orders via an e-commerce like shopping experience, capturing every aspect of their transactions including shipping, account overviews and the printing of invoices.

RESULTS

Created in just four months, the order entry system enables thousands of retailers to manage their orders more effectively, which improves the overall experience for Deckers' customers.

Founded in 1973 in the Southern California beach community of Santa Barbara as a manufacturer of durable, slip-resistant sandals for surfers, Deckers Outdoor Corp. designs and markets a full line of footwear for outdoor activities and everyday casual lifestyle use. Among its popular and well-known brands are UGG® Australia boots, Teva® sandals, Simple® eco-friendly shoes, TSUBO® sport and casual footwear and Deckers® brand flip-flops.

Deckers worked with Visus LLC to create a web-based order-entry system called Deckers Almanac. Crucial to the success of the initiative was that the order entry system be easy for retailers to use and capable of offering up-to-the minute pricing and availability information for the thousands of SKUs that represent the enormous selection of styles, colors and sizes of the Deckers' lines.

"In our environment, our order entry requirements are somewhat unique," says Kevin Gates, Manager of Deckers' applications development team. "Because we are a footwear company, our product line is in a matrix style supporting the reality that we offer several sizes for the same style of shoe. So we couldn't use an out-of-the-box order entry system because it just wouldn't fit our needs."

In Step with Customer Needs

The Visus team was charged with the task of developing a web-based tool that would give retailers an intuitive, easy to use dashboard to place orders directly into the Deckers MRP application. Deckers selected Visus over a larger public consulting firm because of their proficiency with the Microsoft .NET platform, solid backend database expertise and strong focus on building useful and intuitive user interfaces.

"The Visus team is exceptional at developing and architecting intuitive user interfaces," says Gates. "I wanted a UI that was well laid out and easy to use so that our customers can pick it up and run with it without any training. Visus spent the time necessary to make sure they thoroughly understood our vision and requirements. We felt confident we would end up with a system that truly meets our users' needs."

After thoroughly discussing the parameters of the project with Deckers' management, Visus devised a detailed plan that laid out the functionality of a fully customized, web based B2B e-commerce system. In addition to the order entry capability, retailers would have access to reporting tools for checking order status and the ability to capture every aspect of their transactions including shipping, account overviews and the printing of invoices.

"We wanted our retailers to have a familiar, e-commerce-type shopping experience," adds Mr. Gates. "We also wanted to ensure that our internal brand management

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departments would have the ability to manage the items that are available, so that retailers could fill their shopping carts, select their preferred shipping methods at checkout and quickly submit their orders for approval.”

Previously, Deckers used an Oracle-based order entry system from Oracle E-Business Suite, in conjunction with Oracle Database 10g. However the Oracle order entry system was not easy to use.

For example, although the Oracle ERP system could handle sales orders from larger accounts using the EDI protocol, sales representatives had to manually enter orders for smaller retailers.

Not a ‘One-Size Fits All’ Solution

In addition to building the new application, Visus created a level of integration between Deckers Almanac and other existing Oracle applications. Because the web application was running off of a stand-alone Oracle database, Visus created an interface to transfer data from the ERP system to populate the order entry system. The front end of Deckers Almanac was programmed using the Microsoft .NET platform. Invoice printing, order acknowledgements and other reports were developed with Data Dynamics’ Active Reports.

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— Kevin Gates, Manager of Applications Development,
Deckers Outdoor Corp.

“Visus created a workable system that is also extensible, so we’ve been able to add on and tailor it to our needs,” says Gates.”

“This was more than just an order entry system; we needed an information management portal for the sales and marketing departments,” adds Deckers IT Director Kurt Sowa. “By also streaming news and information about regional and national promotions, Visus created a system that educates the customer and keeps them up-to-date

about which new products are coming out and which footwear is being promoted in their area and nationally. Deckers Almanac also allows our sales personnel to communicate directly with their customers and review their orders.”

Keeping Pace with a Nimble Business

Following an aggressive four-month timeline from approval to delivery, Deckers unveiled the new application in September 2007. “We gave Visus an aggressive timeline, and they really came through,” Mr. Gates says. “They did whatever it took to complete the application on schedule.

“Visus did an exceptional job of keeping me informed,” adds Gates. “I felt like there was much more of a personal touch than with a bigger vendor, who you usually have to chase down for information.”

According to Gates, performance and scalability have been excellent and the adoption rate has been significant. To date, buyers at 900 stores are using Deckers Almanac. Approximately 3,000 retailers will use it once it is fully deployed. In the month of December 2008 alone, the system processed more than 4,000 log-ins. The new system saves time for sales reps and allows them to more effectively pursue new accounts. It also greatly streamlines the placing of orders and has opened up a new conduit between the company, field personnel and their customers. For example, order-tracking information is available at any time, complete with hyperlinks to the parcel carrier from the Deckers Almanac page.

“Deckers Almanac has made our collaboration with our customers more efficient,” states Sowa. “It has also empowered our retailers with a platform that is available 24/7. This helps them to manage their orders more effectively and be more self-sufficient, which improves the overall experience for Deckers’ customers.”

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