



GROWING REVENUES AND MANAGING COSTS WITH PROGRESS, FDM4 AND UPP TECHNOLOGY

Broder Bros., Co. is a leading distributor of imprintable sportswear and accessories in the United States and operates under its Broder, Alpha, and NES brands. By maintaining three distinct catalogs, Web sites, sales forces, and call centers, Broder is able to preserve strong brand name recognition and customer goodwill while benefiting from integrated back office operations that provide significant economies of scale. Broder, which generates close to a billion dollars in annual sales, has streamlined operations and increased business efficiency by relying on OpenEdge to differentiate its business and develop a sustainable competitive advantage. Broder has relied on OpenEdge and other products from Progress Software to help the company increase revenues and consolidate infrastructure.

Broder has built a highly scalable order processing, warehousing, and distribution network using solutions from Progress Software and its Application Partners. Broder can accept an order by 5:00 in the afternoon from one of its call centers or one of its Web sites, pick the order, pack it, and record revenue by shipping it UPS for delivery the next morning to more than 80 percent of the locations in the United States. During peak summer months, Broder processes almost 18,000 orders a day.

According to Mike Fabrico, Vice President of Information Technology for Broder Bros., Co., "If a Progress application went down we wouldn't be able to ship products or record revenue, but this isn't an aspect of our business that we have to worry about. A single DBA maintains all of our Progress infrastructure, and all of our Progress databases are monitored around-the-clock and replicated every ten minutes. We rely on proven applications that fit our business model, and OpenEdge provides the development tools, application management tools, relational database and the low cost of ownership that helps us reduce operational costs while helping us increase revenues from all three of our lines of business."

Broder is a leading distributor in the imprintable sportswear and accessories market, which includes undecorated or "blank" T-shirts, sweatshirts, polo shirts, outerwear, caps, bags, and other imprintable accessories that are decorated primarily for advertising and promotional purposes. The company purchases product from more than 70 suppliers, including trade brand suppliers such as Russell, Fruit of the Loom, Hanes, Anvil, and Gildan. Other exclusive or near-exclusive suppliers include retail brands such as Adidas Golf, Columbia Sportswear, and Champion. In addition to purchasing from these distribution suppliers, Broder develops and sources products from over 16 countries to support its private label brands, which include the Devon & Jones, Chestnut Hill, Authentic Pigment, Harriton, HYP, Desert Wash, Great Republic and Harvard Square brands.



CHALLENGE

Become more competitive by improving order turnaround and distribution efficiency

SOLUTION

A cost-effective, scalable IT infrastructure including Progress® OpenEdge® and software from Progress Partners FDM4 International and Upp Technology, Inc.

BENEFIT

Processing transactions more cost-effectively than any company in the industry; driving business to its online channels and increasing revenues

Fabrico said, "We manage over a dozen databases that are replicated every ten minutes, and a single DBA manages nearly 500 gigabytes of data that we use to run our business. We host all our own Web sites, we maintain a single disaster recovery center that supports all of our facilities, and we rely on specialized business applications from Progress Application Partners that are tailored for our unique needs. We count on Progress for the applications and infrastructure we need to sell products, manage inventory, and deliver our products to our customers."



COUNTING ON PROGRESS APPLICATION PARTNERS

Broder currently operates 12 distribution centers, five "Express" facilities which operate as customer pick up locations and has standardized on the FDM4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) application from Progress Application Partner FDM4 International. FDM4 is a robust, eCommerce-enabled ERP solution for B2B and B2C that is focused on the distribution and catalog industries. FDM4 has now been deployed across all Broder divisions, and it is integrated with the IRMS warehouse management system solution from Upp Technology, Inc. (formerly called Integrated Warehousing Solutions).

The use of FDM4 and IRMS have helped Broder reduce warehousing, inventory, and distribution costs by consolidating facilities. Broder now operates one of the most efficient distribution networks in the industry, which consists of 12 distribution centers strategically located throughout the U.S. These facilities provide Broder with the ability to ship via ground parcel service to over 80% of the continental U.S. population within one business day and to over 98% of the continental U.S. population within two business days.

Most orders are packed and shipped within minutes of when they've been received via a call center or Web site, and virtually all orders Broder receives by 5:00 p.m. are picked, packed, and shipped that day. Several of the warehouses are multi-branded—they carry inventory and fulfill orders for two or three of Broder's three brands. The IRMS application has been modified to handle multi-branding in a single distribution center so Broder can further streamline distribution efficiency.

RELYING ON PROGRESS' OPENEDGE®

Applications built on the OpenEdge platform are portable, reliable, and scalable, yet they require fewer administrative resources than other deployment platforms. Broder has largely standardized on OpenEdge to reduce the cost of operations. "We have a relatively small IT department," explained Fabrico. "A single DBA manages all of our mission-critical OpenEdge databases, and two programmers build and maintain our Web applications. This would not be possible if we didn't have such a strong focus on reducing our total cost of ownership and driving down the cost of technology operations."

The Alpha site was originally developed in 2000 and the Broder site was developed in 2004 with Progress® WebSpeed® Workshop. These two sites, along with the NES site, were redesigned and redeveloped with WebSpeed in 2006 and launched in early 2007. According to Fabrico, "During Q1 of this year we expected to see a dip in online orders and revenue for the first couple of months, as many re-launched sites experience. However, we did not see a decline in order volume or revenue, and both continue to trend upward." The company, which generates almost a billion dollars in revenue, now generates in excess of \$300 million of its annual revenue from the Broder, Alpha, and NES Web sites. "We support a greater than \$300 million business with just two WebSpeed developers updating and maintaining the three sites," Fabrico stated.

Broder has just extended its Customer Relationship Management system to allow its sales representatives to access inventory in real-time from their BlackBerry PDAs. "We used WebSpeed to develop a new front-end so we could accelerate the sales cycle for our mobile

sales representatives,” said Fabrico. “Now, when they’re at a customer location they can query the database in real-time to determine stock availability and then close the deal onsite. The reps love it, and we were able to develop this capability in months using only a single programmer.”

Broder has purchased the source code for its applications and carefully maintains it. FDM4 International does much of the software integration and application development work for Broder, and Broder manages internally developed and externally developed software source code using Roundtable TSMS, a total software management system for OpenEdge development that helps improve productivity and decrease time to deployment while improving software quality. “Software applications we develop are assets to the company, and Roundtable allows us to protect these assets and ensure that our software development activities are compliant with relevant Sarbanes-Oxley regulations,” Fabrico said.

ENSURING BUSINESS CONTINUITY

When Broder had diverse applications and database environments, reliability was a major problem. “We didn’t have standard processes in place, and we didn’t have backup and disaster recovery procedures in place to support business continuity,” explained Fabrico. The company deployed Progress® OpenEdge® Management for proactive management of the OpenEdge environment, and Progress® OpenEdge® Replication to protect valuable data and ensure application availability.

Broder also established disaster recovery policies and procedures, and now backs up all databases to a central disaster recovery center—every ten minutes. “When I joined the company the systems went down about once a month in the middle of a business day, but last year the enterprise applications were operational over 99.99 percent of the time,” said Fabrico. “OpenEdge Management and OpenEdge Replication paid for themselves in their first year of deployment. We initially deployed OpenEdge Management to monitor the database, and we would be paged if there was the slightest disruption.”

He added, “For the first time, IT would find out about potential problems before users would be affected. We now monitor the IBM AIX environment with OpenEdge Management and do not rely on any other tools to manage the CPUs, file systems, disks, and storage. This not only helps us keep our management costs down, it helps us keep our revenues up. If our systems went down for an hour we could lose about \$400,000 in revenue, and customers would take their business to our competitors.”

As an exercise to ensure business continuity in the event of a disaster, Broder has actually shut down the live systems a few times during the last four years to ensure seamless operations from the replicated site.

“We need to continue to prove that our disaster recovery methods work, and that the backup servers, databases, and applications work well enough to maintain operations in the event of a failure,” stated Fabrico. “That’s why we periodically conduct live tests and run operations from our recovery center. We give the Progress environment high marks for its ability to be replicated efficiently to a backup disaster recovery site.”

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Mike Fabrico
Vice President of
Information Technology

ABOUT FDM4 INTERNATIONAL INC.

For over 30 years FDM4 International Inc. has specialized in becoming a leading provider of integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), Warehouse Management Software (WMS), eCommerce Web Solutions (B2B/B2C), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and Executive Dashboard.

Its robust, scalable solutions are easy-to-use industry specific applications for Manufacturers/Distributors in various industries including: Consumer Products, Fashion, Apparel, Footwear, and Industrial parts. FDM4 International Inc. has clients that range in size from 20 users to over 1,000 users and its flexible solutions can be configured to perform at the highest efficiency regardless of the size of client. For more information visit: www.fdm4.com

ABOUT UPP TECHNOLOGY, INC.



Headquartered in Downers Grove, Ill., Upp Technology, Inc. is a global provider of IT staffing services, specialized software and innovative technology solutions to Fortune 500 companies, federal, state and local governments and businesses in nearly every major industry. With a dedicated talent pool of 25,000+ IT professionals and a suite of integrated inventory and resource management software products, Upp has been providing real business value to clients for more than 25 years. More at: www.upp.com

PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or in the cloud, on any platform or device, to any data source, with enhanced performance, minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

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