



## Bass Pro reels in customers with the Web Services and XML integration solution from Patrick Townsend & Associates

### Bass Pro: An award winning outdoor retailer

Award-winning for their store concept and design, Bass Pro Shops is headquartered in Springfield, Missouri, and currently has 33 locations across the United States. Named the #1 outdoor retailer in America by Sporting Goods Business Magazine, Bass Pro Shops retail stores are rated high as tourist destination picks with over 78 million people visiting the stores annually. Several stores are their state's #1 tourist attraction and several others place among the top 5. Bass Pro is riding a wave of success because of their strong customer focus. The company plans to open a number of new stores in 2007.

### The Bass Pro customer loyalty program

As a central part of their customer loyalty program Bass Pro offers customers a Bass Pro Shops Visa credit card which enrolls them in the Rewards Points program. Customer earn Rewards Points which they can spend in retail shops and on catalog purchases. Bass Pro also contributes to environmental causes based on customer Visa purchases.

To provide a quality customer experience Bass Pro wanted to implement a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution from RightNow technologies. The CRM solution would let Bass Pro customer support staff receive calls from customers checking the balance of their Rewards Points, or who want to redeem points on Bass Pro products. The RightNow CRM application is a web solution that provides information about the customer's purchase history. A customer call can also lead to new sales of promotional items and gives Bass Pro a way to tell customers about new offerings and events.



## The CRM integration challenge

Bass Pro uses an ERP solution that runs on their IBM System i (also known as AS/400 or iSeries) platform. Customer information, sales history, and product inventories are all managed on the System i server. A major challenge for the CRM project was how to link the CRM application with the real-time information in the System i ERP application database. Like many Enterprise users of CRM applications, the integration with back-end production database systems was a big challenge. The CRM application is a web-based application using XML and web services for integration. The System i server is a database application system based on IBM's DB2 database.



So Bass Pro went fishing for an integration partner who understands both worlds. Don Stephens, Business System Analyst, said "We knew that the success of our project hinged on getting a reliable and scalable integration solution for our System i platform. We needed a solution vendor who understood the IBM System i and who also understood the Internet world of XML and web services". Vicki Coday, the lead developer on the project said "We have a lot of experience implementing System i applications. It's a great platform for our ERP system. Because of our short time frames we wanted a solution that fit well in our existing environment."

## The Alliance Web Services solution solves the problem

Bass Pro found the web integration solution Alliance XML/400 from Patrick Townsend & Associates, Inc. of Olympia, Washington. Specializing in web services integration with the IBM System i platform, the company has deep roots in the IBM System i technology community and understands the integration challenges of web services for System i customers. Bass Pro, like so many Enterprise customers, was new to the world of web services and XML.

The Townsend team went to work with the RightNow and Bass Pro technical teams and soon had a good working prototype. Customer support representatives using RightNow could seamlessly retrieve critical customer information from the System i ERP solution. Bass Pro was on the road to success.

A snag popped up during final testing as Bass Pro ramped up the transaction volume. The System i platform was not able to keep up with the transaction volume that Bass Pro was throwing at it. Patrick Townsend, President of Patrick Townsend &

Associates, said "We knew that we had to lend a hand to solve the transaction volume problem. As a company we live in a world of high volume, mission critical applications. Customers can't always throw hardware at a problem. We were able to bring technologies that we already had in other products to the Alliance XML/400 product for a high volume transaction solution. Pretty soon we were able to meet and exceed Bass Pro's targets for transaction processing."

Bass Pro completed acceptance testing and went live in mid-2006 well before the holiday rush.

### **Bass Pro ends 2006 with flying colors**

Bass Pro ended the 2006 holiday season without a single problem in their CRM integration application. Their IBM System i server with Alliance CRM integration processed the increased volume of transactions at the holiday peak. It was a great way to end the year for this star retailer.

The project was an outstanding success for the Bass Pro technical team. Vicki Coday said "We really appreciated the exceptional support the Townsend team gave us in meeting our web integration needs. They stepped up to every challenge we gave them". Bass Pro has plans for extending the use of the Alliance web integration solution for new projects in 2007.

### **About Alliance Web Services integration products**

Patrick Townsend & Associates provides a variety of web integration solutions for the IBM System i customer. Townsend customers span many industry segments and include Washington Mutual, Day-Brite, Solgar Vitamin, Perry Homes, Vanderbilt, Buckhorn, Swift Transportation, Nucor Steel, Greif, Atlas Van Lines, Vanguard Systems, Baker Hughes, and many others. The Alliance CRM Integration solution combines software, services, and project management for a turn-key solution for CRM integration projects. The Alliance XML/400 software product provides customers a packaged solution and support to implement web services for any requirement. The software includes all of the web communications, XML to database translation, security, and systems management capabilities needed for any web services project. Web integration partners include Microsoft, IBM, Salesforce.com, Lagarde, and others. The company is based in Olympia, Washington and can be reached at (360) 357-8971 or on the web at [www.patowndsend.com](http://www.patowndsend.com).

