

Case Study: IBM Portal Upgrade Prevents Downtime

Preferred IBM® Partner since 1995

Pacific Coast Information Systems Ltd. (PCIS) provides intranet portal design, development and deployment to support and evolve business operations. We utilize best-in-class and proven enterprise platforms, such as IBM® WebSphere to ensure enterprises continue to run smoothly with minimal risk.

Client situation – A need to maximize e-commerce site availability to increase revenues

The client is a not-for-profit member services organization with more than half a million members. In addition to their sales centers and membership print magazine, the client's e-commerce website is a significant promotional vehicle for member services, insurance, travel and other affiliated services.

There was an urgent need to stabilize the client's e-commerce infrastructure and upgrade their IBM WebSphere Portal. Every hour of outage was costing tens of thousands of dollars per hour. Therefore, the client contracted PCIS to immediately maintain and upgrade their existing infrastructure.

PCIS approach – Improving operations to ensure uptime

The PCIS team started out with creating a road map to help improve system availability and integration with the existing business applications. As part of the road map, the PCIS team presented the client with a number of alternatives with pros and cons. Then, PCIS and the client jointly chose the option that was seen as the best solution moving forward. The solution included:

- Implementing the plan and deploying all infrastructures on virtual hardware for increased manageability and scalability.
- Upgrading the existing IBM WebSphere Platform infrastructure to the latest version with the latest features for improved performance and system stability.
- Consolidating all web content to the web content management system the client was using and had a working knowledge.
- Adding features and introducing processes to improve the operations and system for high availability.

After the initial project, several IT projects initiated by the marketing department followed. One of the client's marketing initiatives was to quickly deploy new forms on the web site, with automatic email notifications and collecting the user input into a database. The solution included setting up a system that allowed the marketing department to create simple HTML forms and publish them in minutes without any involvement from IT. The previous implementation required development effort and in some cases, took several weeks from the marketing initiative to getting the form live. The business value was evident as the marketing department could quickly create forms they needed for revenue-generation activities.

The PCIS team implemented other initiatives such as:

- Integrating a third-party XML information feed seamlessly to the web site.
- Providing operations support as the client had a shortage of internal resources, with the required knowledge to efficiently support the e-commerce environment. The PCIS team supported the client with deployments of new applications and application updates, helped with troubleshooting integration issues with the e-commerce platform and their internal business systems, as well as defined and documented operational procedures.

PCIS

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CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

"The PCIS team is an instrumental partner. Relying on their expertise for business analysis, design, development, project management and support services, we delivered a high-valued B2B IBM WebSphere Portal that serves the needs of multiple stakeholders in the insurance and health sectors. We look forward to building a deeper relationship with PCIS"
Dan, Senior Director – Solutions Consulting Enterprise Healthcare Solutions

"PCIS has been a trusted advisor for IBM enterprise solutions since 1995. This expertise was critical for stabilizing and upgrading our web infrastructure. The PCIS team also provided ongoing operations support and new development for our e-commerce site."
Brad, Web Manager – E-Commerce Site

"PCIS provides strategic planning and development for Lotus Domino, ensuring greatly improved uptime for our critical business systems and applications. The team also provides the expertise to strengthen our operations by helping us to better forecast our costs and assign priorities."
Rob, VP of Information Technology – Education

IBM technologies for efficient business operations

PCIS helped define the business requirements with the following recommended technology:

- **IBM WebSphere Portal Server** – A scalable and robust portal platform.
- **IBM WebSphere Application Server** – Open standards Java web applications server.
- **IBM HTTP Server** – Platform for static content and load-balancing for the WebSphere Portal Server nodes.
- **IBM DB2** – Relational database engine for storing both portal configuration information and custom application data.
- **IBM WebSphere MQ** – Message queue for guaranteed message transfer between business systems.

Client results – Effective technology solutions to prevent outages for continuous operations

The client selected PCIS as a provider due to its reputation as a Preferred IBM® Partner since 1995, along with its strategic planning and implementation experience to stabilize their environment. The PCIS team also discovered the client's other business and e-commerce systems were unstable. To resolve the problems, the PCIS team provided documentation support and integration between IBM WebSphere and other business systems. The PCIS team also provided weekly onsite visits for operational support. This enabled the client to minimize downtime continuously. They had a very low tolerance for outage as each hour of downtime represented an opportunity loss that was very significant for revenue generation.

Our vision is to make your business more efficient and profitable

PCIS has been a trusted IBM® partner since 1995 for enterprise solutions. More recently, it has developed solid partnerships with Microsoft®, Blackberry®, Bell® and TELUS®. By focusing on your business requirements first, rather than rely on technology first, we provide innovative IT consulting solutions to make your business stronger. More information can be found at www.pcis.com.