



Real-Time Reporting Is Not a Luxury at Diamond.com

**Orders can run in the thousands of dollars,
so when anything goes wrong, someone gets really, really angry.**

When Joe Partlow joined Diamond.com as Development Manager, he faced tremendous information pressures. With too few tools to meet them.

One issue was the scope of the operation. Diamond.com offers 80,000 items. It owns and operates websites and call centers for ashford.com, Diamond.com and WorldofWatches.com, three of the Internet's premier sites for luxury items. Annual catalogs were also part of the mix.

Another issue was success. During the 2003 high season, Thanksgiving to Christmas, Diamond.com hosted a quarter-million visitors a day, processed 40,000 orders and broke the \$1 million a day sales barrier. Volume was up 100% from the previous year.

But from the IS vantage point, the biggest issue of all was the demand for flexible reports available on an almost hourly basis.

**Ecometry handles the back office.
But how to get critical information front and center.**

Diamond.com is 4½ years old. The founders had previous experience with Ecometry, so they chose Ecometry Version 6.11 and modules to handle Web and call center orders, assembly and credit card authorizations. The whole back office runs on the HP e3000, while the Diamond.com Web sites run on a separate system.

Mr. Partlow's users started clamoring for reports or variations on reports that Ecometry didn't provide. Diamond.com is highly promotions oriented, and it was difficult to quickly get the information required to manage:

- Multiple promotions running on a single site.
- Promotions running on multiple sites.
- Promotion durations modified depending upon response.
- Promotions that must end quickly due to depleted inventory.

- Promotions designed to maximize high-season sales.
- Bad guys attracted by luxury items. Not only is it critical to avoid costly charge-backs caused by fraud, but also to distinguish fraud from simple customer errors.

To get the information needed, Diamond.com had to pull multiple MACS reports from Ecometry and combine relevant data into Excel. No one appreciated the extra time and effort.

According to Mr. Partlow, “The sales people wanted additional fields not included in the Ecometry reports. Or they would need several different reports to get a total view. We would have to combine two or three of those reports into one piece for them. We also had to process and lookup on the Web sites. It was very hard on Ecometry to break out different zones and categories per Web site.”

The nuts and bolts of selling rocks and Rolexes.

Building a data warehouse seemed the logical solution. That was the only way to dig into and report from current information on a moment’s notice. It also promised better performance from the e3000s which were already under heavy pressure during the high sales seasons.

Diamond.com first replicated data from the Ecometry modules and the web sites to the SQL Server data warehouse through ODBC software in batch mode. However, this proved too slow. Information was needed down to the item and customer level, and a complete reload of Ecometry data was required for each request.

To make things worse, Mr. Partlow had to divide his attention between building the data warehouse, providing data needs for web processing, and his day-to-day responsibilities. “Things change so fast around here, I not only had to make reports available now, but also account for people out of the office – at conferences, or weekends, that type of thing. They like to monitor sales all the time. Basically, I have to automate our sales flash report and send it to their cell phones and email boxes every couple of hours,” says Partlow. He needed a way to get the job done fast and use his limited available time most efficiently.

The answer was Ecomedate and BridgeWare

Mr. Partlow then turned to Ecomedate and BridgeWare, a bundled product combining field-proven data replication technology and predefined routines to normalize and decode Ecometry data. Having access to accurate, cleansed Ecometry data in a relational environment was the key. It makes reporting a snap.

Ecomedate provides clean, well-organized data with each hidden Ecometry field now represented by its own column. Ecomedate provides predefined mappings for forty-three key datasets ranging from order information to inventory. The routines are grouped into 12 different groups. The product provides varying degrees of normalization and can be customized to meet each organization's individual needs or uses of the data.

Because most of the scripting work was done, Mr. Partlow could finish a data group in about 2-1/2 days. Diamond.com required 8 data groups, so the whole job about 20 non-consecutive days. He's quick to point out, "It would have been a lot smoother if I was able to dedicate myself to the job. You know, stay on it and get it done. It's difficult to come back and pick up exactly where you left off. Dedicated resources would probably have shortened the job by a third."

Adds Cailean Sherman, Taurus President, "We're pleased we can help Diamond.com and others increase the flexibility, speed and accuracy of reporting from Ecometry data, so they can keep pace with the needs of today's Internet marketplace."