

**Success Story:
Sendmail Powers
Customer Service
with High-
performance
Email System**

THE RETAILER

A dramatic increase in email usage overloaded the system of a leading retail company with an international network of stores, a worldwide catalog business, and a popular online shopping site. As a result, their IT team was challenged with finding a comprehensive email system to improve messaging performance, reliability and scalability. The new system also had to deliver leading-edge communications capabilities that would support the company's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. To make things interesting, and to be prepared for the busy holiday shopping season, the IT organization had to complete a bullet-proof implementation in just five days, with complete transparency to users and no disruption of service.

TECHNOLOGY TO MATCH THE TRADITION OF GREAT CUSTOMER SERVICE

Founded in 1912, this mail order business is built on a passion for the outdoors, an embodiment of Yankee honesty, and an unwavering commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. With annual sales exceeding US\$1 billion, the original one-man operation has expanded to a large enterprise with an international network of more than 20 retail stores and factory outlets. In addition, the company has a worldwide catalog business and a Web site that draws visitors from all corners of the globe.

Customer service is at the heart of the award-winning enterprise. With a customer satisfaction department servicing inquiries around the clock, the company is committed to providing state-of-the-art communications. But with email usage rising dramatically for customer service and communications, the IT group decided to replace the two most important channels for customer-facing email: the eCare and Electronic Gift Certificates.

With the current system already overloaded, this primarily catalog-based company needed a solution that would support high volumes of email and prioritize outbound email. The outbound mail router in use at the time mixed high-priority email (eCare and Electronic Gift Certificates) with lower-priority email, resulting in low performance that was not fast enough for the anticipated growth. The replacement system needed to provide significant improvements in performance, reliability and scalability.

RAPID DEPLOYMENT FOR THE HOLIDAY SHOPPING SEASON

Although the IT staff traditionally makes no system changes after September, they realized that their current system probably could not adequately support the anticipated load for the upcoming holiday shopping season. Therefore, their challenge was to complete a bullet-proof implementation within just five days, with no interruption whatsoever of email service.

Given their deadline and requirements, the IT group set the following goals for implementation of a new high-performance mainframe email system:

- **Integration** – quick and seamless integration into the existing email environment
- **Bullet-proof migration** – no email messages lost in migration from Software.com's Post Office POP3 server and mail relay
- **Transparent to end-users** – the functionality visible to end-users must be identical to the Post.Office implementation
- **Enhanced system performance** – to meet reliability and future scalability targets

LEVERAGING SENDMAIL EXPERTISE

The retailer's IT group studied various competitive offerings and concluded that Sendmail offered the most comprehensive email system. Mailstream Omnistore™ from Sendmail would deliver the feature-rich yet user-friendly messaging environment their customers had come to expect, combined with a robust, directory-driven architecture that would address the IT organization's stated goals.

Given the short implementation window, the IT group engaged Sendmail Professional Services to ensure the success of the project. This allowed the customer to take full advantage of Sendmail's domain expertise and industry-proven methodology, gained at over 1,000 successful enterprise implementations.

"Sendmail beat my expectations by delivering twice as much in half the time. Their products always work!" — VP of IT

BUSINESS ISSUES

- Upgrade email system to meet peak volume period with no downtime
- Ensure 24x7 support for customer service
- Improve performance, reliability and scalability

SENDMAIL SOLUTION

- Mailstream Commander™
- Mailcenter Omnistore™
- Mailstream Switch™ MTA
- Sendmail Professional Services

RESULTS

- Secure and reliable email routing
- Centrally managed multiple Mailstream Switch MTA's
- Carrier-grade mission-critical email system
- Deployed production mail store in 5 working days with no downtime
- Tuned to perform at the highest level possible

BENCHMARKING TO MAXIMIZE PERFORMANCE

Sendmail worked with the IT group to benchmark different solution options. This enabled them to identify the configuration best suited to support the company's huge email load.

Benchmark results demonstrated that Linux outperformed a UNIX alternative in tests of the Sendmail system running on an IBM mainframe. With Linux, the mainframe-based Sendmail system delivered 25 messages per second to an external host. This represented a 5X performance improvement when compared to UNIX that delivered only about 5 messages per second.

Mailstream Commander, Sendmail's MTA management console, allowed the company to run multiple Mailstream Switch MTAs and Flow Control filters to manage and monitor performance from a centralized Web-based console. The Commander console enabled the organization to quickly and easily scale their infrastructure to meet the growing email networking needs. It provided complete configuration management, operational control, monitoring, and reporting for multiple clusters of Mailstream Switch MTAs, open source sendmail MTAs, and Flow Control servers.

To support the retailer's eCare system, they installed Sendmail Mailcenter Omnistore advanced message solution. The Mailcenter server stores email messages for the third-party software application that manages the eCare system.

ENSURING RELIABILITY, SECURITY, MANAGEABILITY AND SCALABILITY

The customer also installed two Mailstream Switch MTAs to provide secure, reliable and scalable routing for the customer's extensive email network. The Mailstream Switch MTA can scale to millions of messages per hour, support hundreds of domains, and provide a centralized, Web-based graphical user interface (GUI) to manage routing, reporting and other security functions. An API supports additional security components, including anti-spam, anti-virus, text and attachment filters and policy enforcement.

One Sendmail Switch MTA serves as the primary mail router for all inbound Internet message traffic, including email for the company's approximately 5,000 employees. It also handles the high-priority outbound eCare and Electronic Gift Certificates email. The second Sendmail Switch MTA at the Internet gateway manages all email that comes from customers, suppliers and business partners.

Mailcenter Omnistore is a key product that extends email to desk-less workers who otherwise would not have access to important business communications. Mailcenter Omnistore provides mail storage, access, personal filtering and quarantining, as well as Web messaging services that include mail, address book, and calendaring.

RESULTS: FROM PILOT TO PRODUCTION IN 5 DAYS

Within the short window of time required, Sendmail successfully designed and deployed a high-performance email system that supports this retail giant's vital customer service operation. "Sendmail sent the experts," states the customer's project lead. "I can't ever recall another IT messaging project going from pilot to production in 5 days."

The new Sendmail system delivers five times the throughput of the old system; this retailer is prepared to meet the demands of holiday shoppers. The resilient Sendmail architecture provides the reliability their high-volume business requires, as well as scalability for the future.

"We are a company with very high standards for quality, satisfaction and commitment to customer needs," says the project lead. "Sendmail is one company that meets our standards on every level. They've delivered an email system that meets our mission-critical needs."

Clearly, this standard-setting implementation supports the IT department's vision statement: "Beat my expectations by delivering twice as much in half the time, and Sendmail's products always work."

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**Secure, Dependable
and Compliant
Messaging.**



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