



buyproduce.com

Digital marketplace bears fruit in produce industry

Business Results:

- Beat the competition with the first digital marketplace for fresh-produce buyers and sellers
- Obtained a proven, high-performance solution from day one
- Streamlined the transaction process from days to seconds

What makes it work?

Services:

Compaq Global Services:

- Architecture planning and design for systems and network infrastructure
- Project management
- Compaq eBusiness Architecture Services Lab
- System installation

“With Compaq Global Services handling every aspect of the project, we had a proven, reliable solution from day one.”

Jim Delurgio – *Chief Information Officer, buyproduce.com*

buyproduce.com, a business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce site, links produce buyers and sellers through a digital marketplace and leads the market as the first solution of its kind. The Irvine, CA-based company peels away layers of processes that plague the rest of the industry and threaten produce quality. Buyers and suppliers tap into the 24x7 buyproduce.com marketplace to gain worldwide exposure and exchange real-time quotes, ordering and shipping information at a fraction of the time it normally takes.

Targeting a \$200 billion global fresh produce industry, the company quickly captured more than 15 percent of the market. buyproduce.com made its debut during the industry’s largest show in October 1999 – to the awe of onlookers and the envy of competitors.

“All 17 of our competitors claimed they would be live in time for the event and we were the only one that made it – and we’re still the only one in production,” says buyproduce.com, Chief Information Officer, Jim Delurgio. “The difference for us was that we partnered with Compaq Global Services to develop and implement the digital marketplace within just four months. There was really no way we were going to meet that aggressive production deadline on our own.”

The digital marketplace revolutionizes an industry that typically relies on phones and faxes to conduct business. Processing an order takes anywhere from 45 minutes to two days as buyers and sellers exchange messages, determine availability and haggle over prices. Considering that buyers purchase as many as 75 different products from five to ten suppliers

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Hardware:

Implemented within a Compaq Distributed Internet Server Array (DISA) architecture:

- (2) Compaq ProLiant™ 1850R Web servers
- (2) Compaq ProLiant 6400 clustered database servers
- Compaq ProLiant 6400R servers, enterprise application servers
- Compaq ProLiant 1850R mail, messaging, file and print servers
- Compaq iPAQ™ H3600 Pocket PC, Compaq Aero™ 2100 Palm-size PC

Software:

- Microsoft® Windows NT® Server network operating system
- Microsoft SQL Server database
- Microsoft Windows 2000 operating system (future)
- Microsoft Windows DNA architecture
- Microsoft Internet Information Server
- Microsoft Site Server
- Oracle Financial applications

each day, the amount of back-and-forth interactions severely impacts productivity.

To change this cumbersome business model in record time, buyproduce.com took full advantage of Compaq eBusiness solutions, aimed at helping companies build high-performance, reliable and scalable e-marketplaces. Four full-time consultants from Compaq Computer Corporation – a project manager, a senior architect, a technical consultant and a Microsoft partner program manager – wrote the specifications; planned and designed the system and network infrastructure; installed the systems; and managed the project. Developed, tested and deployed in the Compaq



eBusiness Architecture Services Lab, buyproduce.com launched its e-business on a tried-and-true solution and quickly began to reap the rewards of B2B e-commerce.

"With a complete suite of hardware and software available to us at the lab, we didn't have to buy a thing to start development immediately," says Delurgio. "We came to the lab with our functional requirements and Compaq did the rest." Once proven, buyproduce.com purchased their own Compaq servers and the consultants set up the production environment. Orders started flowing in September – a full month before deadline.

"With Compaq Global Services handling every aspect of the project, we didn't have the technical failures and delays our competitors experienced," says Delurgio. "We had a proven, reliable solution from day one."

Planting the seeds for power and growth

Today, buyers find pricing and product availability instantly via the buyproduce.com marketplace, and the purchasing process takes only seconds. Buyers simply log in using a password, browse online supplier catalogs, review price lists for each seller and place an order. buyproduce.com remains a neutral party in every transaction and takes a small percentage of the deal as payment.

Suppliers also benefit. With a price always extended to buyers via the marketplace, they no longer miss opportunities to bid amidst a flurry of phone messages and faxes. Suppliers can also furnish varying prices to different distribution centers or buyers. Security features keep vendor price lists confidential from other suppliers.

Compaq and Microsoft technology are at the core of this e-business. Compaq consultants architected the solution according to the Compaq Distributed Internet Server Array (DISA) architecture, a blueprint for implementing high-performance and scalable e-commerce solutions, and the Microsoft Windows DNA architecture. To cut its own costs, buyproduce.com outsources its data center to Exodus Communications Inc., which hosts some of the world's leading e-commerce sites.

At the front-end, Microsoft load-balancing technology keeps availability high by distributing requests to arrays of high-volume Compaq *ProLiant*™ Web servers. Load balancing allows multiple servers to function as a single large server and provides redundancy for high availability. If one server fails, another picks up the workload without interruption. On the back end, clustered high-end *ProLiant* servers drive the Microsoft SQL Server database and support the 24x7 transaction-processing environment, which is essential to e-business. Check Point FireWall-1 software keeps information secure.

Compaq consultants made sure that buyproduce.com was ready to accommodate an increasing number of customers and trading partners. The company adds servers and storage incrementally, at the front or back end, to handle rising transaction volumes easily and cost effectively.



Good news from the grapevine

Once online, buyproduce.com customers immediately reported measurable benefits. In the time it usually takes to get prices out to 100 customers, Prime Time International of Coachella, CA says it can reach more than 1,000 customers through the buyproduce.com marketplace. Chong's Produce of San Jose, CA says that buyproduce.com cuts the whole transaction process in half. MCL Distributing in Los Angeles, CA reports that it eliminates hours of faxes and e-mails with a few minutes of online buying. And Sandstone Marketing of Brawley, CA projects that its market exposure will increase tenfold with buyproduce.com.

Compaq Global Services is integrating the Web site with other buyproduce.com enterprise systems, such as Oracle Financials, and moving the solution to the Microsoft Windows 2000 operating system. Compaq consultants prepare



quarterly releases, which include enhancements such as integration between the marketplace and customers' back-end systems. Compaq will serve as systems integrator for buyproduce.com suppliers and buyers who want to optimize these B2B processes.

Compaq Global Services will also help buyproduce.com incorporate digital imaging and bar code technology into the process. Handheld Compaq *iPAQ*™ Pocket PCs and Compaq *Aero*™ Palm-size PCs will capture shipment information from transaction systems. As trucks arrive at customer docks, clerks will know the content and quality grade of goods contained on each truck. If a problem occurs, a digital camera within the device will record images of damaged or subpar produce, and send the image to all parties involved. buyproduce.com aims to reduce problem resolution from 24 hours to less than two hours – critical time in the life of a perishable product.

Delurgio credits Compaq with helping buyproduce.com establish credibility with Sequoia Capital, the same venture capitalist firm that launched Cisco, Apple and Yahoo! “Compaq is well-respected in the e-commerce

industry,” he says. “With Compaq as our business partner, we quickly established that we were not just another new dot.com company. We expected Compaq to build us an industrial-strength solution, but we didn't expect Compaq to become such a critical business partner in our success.”

Compaq consultants will see the fruits of their labor reflected in ongoing business as buyproduce.com extends its Compaq eBusiness solutions. “Excellent products and superior services will keep us coming back to Compaq,” says Delurgio.

For more information about Compaq products and services, call 1-800-AT-COMPAQ or visit the Compaq World Wide Web site at www.compaq.com.

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1355-0800A-WWEN

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