adidas—a name synonymous with style and agility—applies the same principles to its 5250 System i legacy applications

By Marcus Dee

Background

The adidas Group was started in 1920 by **Adi Dassler**, a German entrepreneur. Adi was a real visionary and wanted to make the best sports shoes money could buy. Having set up his small business and naming it "adidas," no guessing where the name came from—he set about the manufacture of his perfect sports footwear. By 1928, sports people were wearing his shoes at the Olympic Games of that year, held in Amsterdam.

The rest, as they say, is history. Today, with World Headquarters in Herzogenaurach, Germany (known to insiders as Herzo-base), adidas has become a name that is synonymous with quality, style, and agility, associated with every conceivable sport and leisure activity, and involved in one way or another with every major sporting event in the global calendar today.

From those humble origins in 1920, it is now a corporation with revenues around €10 billion and representation in every major market in the world.

Today, the company is the world's largest manufacturer of sports footwear, clothing and accessories and in 2006 acquired one of its major competitors, Reebok.

adidas Korea is just one of the many successful national subsidiaries of the group, now with 500 stores around the country. Being a long-established user of **IBM® System i™** hardware, it had developed its own legacy ERP application which has successfully coped with the company's requirements for some years.

Challenge

The problem was—and it's a problem shared by many 5250 based applications around the world—that the system was hampered by its green-screen design and text interface. There was also no chance of successfully and easily achieving the integration requirements being consistently identified by users for the desktop functions of Microsoft® Office™ etc.

"Our system needed agile responses and data integrity throughout all the processes relating to new product announcements, promotions and the processing of orders and sales. To achieve these requirements, we investigated a number of different options, and decided to work with a third party vendor who could help us develop a new graphical, web-enabled user interface on the System i, based on our text-based legacy system," said **B.H. Lee**, Team Leader of adidas Korea's IT team.

Solution

"Our end users are very happy with the convenience and added functions that we have provided them with. They love the seemless integration with Microsoft Office and now think the System i is wonderful!" said Mr. Lee.

They now have an integrated, Web-enabled system capable of graphical information and easy, rapid integration with other applications—and with no changes required to the legacy system! Their new user interface integrates seamlessly with Excel™, Word™ and other desktop applications. The old sayings, "Seeing is believing" and "A picture speaks a thousand words" are what come to mind when Mr. Lee considers the outcomes of his recent modernization project. Indeed, he reckons that the real worth of a good application is when it outperforms user expectations, and that is what he and his team have achieved for adidas Korea's users—not at all dissimilar to the aspirations of his founder, Adi Dassler, all those years ago.

"The more we enhance, modernize, and integrate our applications, the more we appreciate the power of our System i," said Mr. Lee. "Our users are now actively suggesting other ways in which the applications can benefit from our new capabilities—it seems to them that there is very little you can't do with it!"

As the corporate slogan says, "Impossible is Nothing!" **CC**

About the Author

Marcus Dee is Managing Director, **look**software. Marcus has a degree in Computer Science and over 25 years experience in the IBM midrange. Application development tools and methods were the early focus; for the past 13 years Marcus has worked with **look**software, the Australian based developer of **new**look and **soa**rchitect. Today the focus is helping customers reuse, integrate and extend their existing back-end System i applications with leading front-end technologies and platforms including Web services and SOA, Outlook, Notes, Google and rich, thin and mobile clients.