

Fellowes Supplies Employees and Retailers with Access to Corporate Assets via Brand Portals



Headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, Fellowes, is global leader in mobile, computer and consumer electronic accessories, record storage, and business machines. The company employs more than 1,300 people throughout the world and expects 2003 global sales to exceed \$600 million

Industry

Consumer manufacturing

Geography

Worldwide

Deployment Summary

- Interwoven MediaBin digital asset management (DAM) server enables Fellowes to store, organize, search, access, and distribute image-based assets. Used by U.S. employees, eventual users include retail partners and creative agencies that will retrieve images through multiple brand portals
- Seamless integration of MediaBin and Oracle ERP system enable linkage of product images with product specifications

Benefits

- Savings of \$250,000 per year as result of eliminated production and distribution of product CDs and outsourcing expenses
- Enhanced retailer satisfaction and effectiveness by enabling direct access to brand images and product specifications
- Improved internal efficiencies through readily accessible assets



“By enabling us to build brand portals that our retail partners can access themselves, Interwoven MediaBin is helping us strengthen our retailer relationships and build competitive advantage.”

—Brad Hillebrand, manager of enterprise technology

Fellowes was founded in 1917 when Harry Fellowes paid \$50 for Bankers Box and quickly transformed this relatively discrete purchase into a profitable enterprise. Today, Fellowes’ substantial stable of products includes everything from business machines such as shredders, binders, laminators, and record storage products, to a full-line of mobile products, media labeling, storage, and desktop products.

One of Fellowes’ primary goals is to help its major retailers market and sell its products. “At Fellowes, we strive to help our retailers by providing them with first-class service,” says Brad Hillebrand, manager of enterprise technology at Fellowes. “It is imperative we continue to seek ways to improve and innovate this service, and make doing business with us as easy and convenient as possible.” This commitment is reflected by the many “Vendor of the Year” awards the company has received over the years from many national retailers and global distribution partners.

To support marketing campaigns for its retail partners, it is critical that Fellowes provide its retailers with two essential elements: 1) up-to-date product images; and 2) corresponding product specifications. However, prior to 2002, the company was unable to meet either objective very cost effectively or efficiently. At the time, the company was distributing 17 CDs with up-to-date product images to each of its retail partners on a quarterly basis—an inefficient, time-intensive task. Moreover, product specifications were not even included in this mailing. What’s more, because it lacked the ability to store its more than 9,000

product images in-house, Fellowes relied on a third party vendor to store all of these product images, making it expensive and time consuming to retrieve the images when they were requested.

“The processes we had in place for storing and distributing our brand images were very impractical. Not only was it difficult to access images because the site hosted by our third party was slow and the searches poor, but, we were getting charged every time our marketing department wanted to download an image,” says Hillebrand. Furthermore, with product specifications scattered across various systems throughout the organization, there was no way for Fellowes to directly link a product image to a product specification, making it extremely difficult for Fellowes’ marketing and sales departments to access product information they needed.

“Our real pain was that there was no way to easily access comprehensive information about a particular product. Now, we have one place to view the product image, image variations as well as 65 fields of specification data—such as upc, sku, descriptions, weights and dimensions etc.—all of the information that is absolutely crucial to promote our products. Before, this just wasn’t readily available,” says Hillebrand.

Rich functionality out of the box

To address these inefficiencies, Fellowes recognized it needed a digital asset management (DAM) system that would enable it to bring the storage, management, and distribution of its product images in-house, and also

integrate with the company's existing Oracle ERP system as well as future systems. Upon evaluating a number of products, Fellowes selected Interwoven MediaBin. "We looked at about six packages and did a cross-comparison. After evaluating each product for two to three weeks, we ended up circling back to MediaBin, because it delivered everything it promised and more."

Key to Fellowes' selection was the superior image repository capability delivered by MediaBin, which enabled Fellowes to flexibly store and update all of Fellowes' product images. Also important was the fact that the MediaBin was extremely easy to use and understand by Fellowes' non-technical users. Moreover, MediaBin's transformation engine capabilities, which enable employees to download images in the appropriate format they need was unmatched.

Six-week implementation

According to Hillebrand, Fellowes, was able to get its MediaBin system up-and-operating within six weeks. "MediaBin delivered tremendous value right out of the box with little modification," says Hillebrand. "As a result, I didn't have to hire a ton of developers to make this thing work, which was a huge bonus. As a matter of fact, only one developer was needed—Bob Piotrowski of Azonic software."

A two-phased approach

Fellowes decided to implement its MediaBin strategy in two phases. The first phase involved the linking of its MediaBin repository with the company's Oracle ERP system in the U.S. By doing this, it enabled internal departments within the company, such as marketing, product management, and customer service, to be able to access linked product images and product specifications. So, when an employee updates any product specification in Oracle the update is dynamically fed into MediaBin. To interface the two systems, Fellowes used Microsoft's SQL server, which provided fast database driven technology to transfer the product information between Oracle and MediaBin. "We thought this was an advantage, since we

didn't want to have to contend with online queries over our live production system.

It also enables us to customize the 'MediaBin database' in any way we see fit. We will also be able to use SQL to interface with additional systems we acquire down the road," notes Hillebrand.

Phase II, currently underway, involves the creation of tailored brand portals for each of Fellowes' national retailers and global distribution partners, who for the first time will be able to view and download product images and specifications online. This phase will also entail the incorporation of images for the Fellowes European operations through European repositories.

Improved collaboration with retailers

With its MediaBin digital asset management system in place, Fellowes' retailers are now able to access product images and product specifications together. "Product specs are a big deal. People need that information to do their marketing campaigns. By making all of that information easily accessible online, it's going to add a lot more value for our customers and ultimately make us easier to do business with. We also hope this product will break new ground and set us a further ahead of our competition. We don't see any of them implementing systems at this level," emphasizes Hillebrand.

Immediate ROI realized

With greater benefits anticipated down the road, Fellowes has already realized significant savings from its MediaBin implementation. "Right now, I'm looking at an immediate hard cost savings of \$250,000 annually due to the elimination of our outside vendor hosting costs and our manual CD distribution processes," says Hillebrand. "And that's not including the costs we incurred downloading hi-resolution images—nobody could put a value on that." Fellowes shut down the third party hosting service at the end of September. The company anticipates even greater savings from the replacement of an additional Website, which currently houses all the company's product literature, with the MediaBin repository.

Technology

Solution Summary:

Interwoven MediaBin digital asset management server software provides Fellowes with a full-featured central library for the thousands of its digital assets used to promote its products and brands. With MediaBin, Fellowes' marketing team can easily catalog, manage, transform, and deploy digital assets, including product photographs, graphics, and marketing collateral.

Interwoven, Inc.
803 11th Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94089 USA
(408) 774-2000

Interwoven, TeamSite, OpenDeploy, the taglines, logo and service marks are trademarks of Interwoven, Inc., which may be registered in certain jurisdictions. All other trademarks are owned by their respective owners. Copyright 1996-2003 Interwoven, Inc. All rights reserved. csfel_1—December 2003.