

## BCD

**Mississippi Sportswear**, a division of Betlin, Inc. manufactures athletic uniforms and apparel in a state-of-the-art production facility in Kosciusko, Mississippi. Its products are marketed through dealers nationwide under the names Athletix, Msports, and CheerKids. Mississippi Sportswear's IT infrastructure is supported by an IBM i5, model 520.



**BCD:** *What core application software packages are you using?*

**Carter:** "We only use VAI's accounts receivable package right now. Everything else is custom. WebSmart has helped us transform an antiquated system of green screen and file maintenance programs into a modern, state-of-the-art web-based system. Everything is graphical and easy to understand now, as opposed to the old way of having to understand what every field in every file meant. It has taken us about a year to redesign the whole system, and our parent company has decided that they want to be on board as well. They bought us a new i520 with plans to merge them onto our system. WebSmart has been the ideal platform to design a system for two companies operating over a VPN. After all, the internet was made for HTTP."

**BCD:** *What applications did you develop with WebSmart?*

**Carter:** "We did just about everything with WebSmart. For example, we did an order entry system for stock merchandise and a custom order entry system for custom orders. Dealers can check inventory, check prices, place orders, get PDF copies of their invoices, review order status, and track it with UPS. Our sales reps can track orders with ease now; before they had to call a skilled customer service person."

**BCD:** *How many people staff your IT department?*

**Carter:** "It's just me. I have to maintain all the PC's, write RPG and do all of the web development."

**BCD:** *Did it take long to understand WebSmart?*

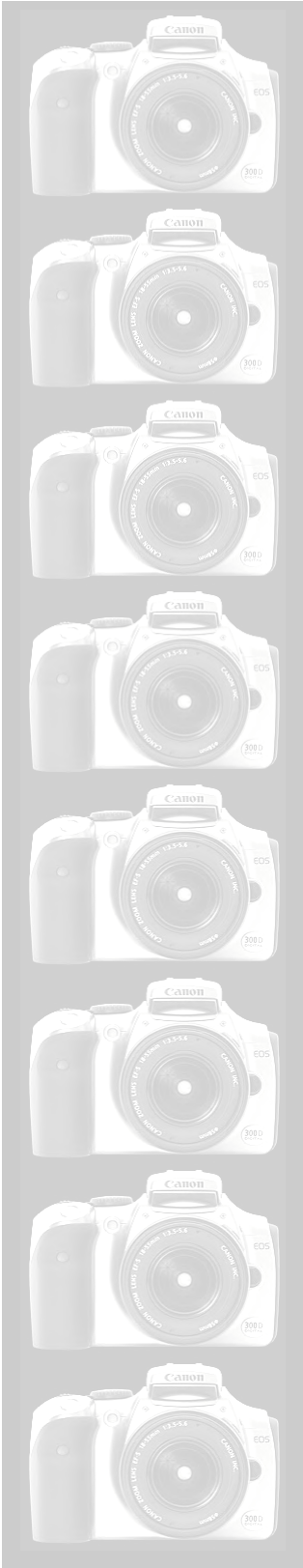
**Carter:** "It took less than a day to figure it out with no formal training. I had to learn HTML, but the HTML used in WebSmart programs is pretty simple. If you use it enough you become one with it! PML looks enough like Java and C++ that you can pick up on it quickly."

**BCD:** *Did you consider any other options?*

**Carter:** "The first thing that everybody looks at is WebSphere. Several people told me what a headache it was, and it wouldn't run well on the 170 that we had. WebSmart eliminated the need for WebSphere along with costly hardware upgrades. It seemed smart to buy something that didn't require a new box."

**BCD:** *What are a few things that you really like about WebSmart?*

**Carter:** "It was easy to use and ran very well on our old 170."



**BCD:** *Are you working on projects that involve WebSmart now?*

**Carter:** “We are working on a full blown custom order entry program that will let dealers specify everything that pertains to the end product. You can change the color, lettering, put special numbers on the uniforms. We even thought about placing the customer’s face on top of the jersey.”

**BCD:** *Are you using any other BCD products?*

**Carter:** “We bought WebSmart, Catapult and Nexus. Catapult has eliminated the need for us to purchase IBM fax support/400 and the expensive hardware that goes along with that. It has also eliminated the need for IBM AFP software by allowing the use of different fonts including barcodes. I dreaded the idea of having to learn how to write programs for AFP. I am sure we will find many more uses for Catapult as we continue our project of trying to eliminate costly and inconvenient pre-printed forms.”

**BCD:** *What about ROI - have you been able to justify the cost of WebSmart?*

**Carter:** “I had to commit to the board of directors that it would pay for itself by January, 2004, which was just two months after we bought it, and it definitely did. Since then it has really helped the profitability of the company. We don’t have to spend as much money answering customer service related calls. That’s where it has really made a difference—customer self service.”

**BCD:** *What would you like to tell others about your experience with BCD Products?*

**Carter:** “WebSmart has allowed us to finish our projects in record time. I would recommend WebSmart to anybody who hates the idea of having to program sub-files, which includes a lot of people I know. WebSmart can cut hours, and even days, off a project because every programmer knows that new projects mean new database files. And, every time you create a database file, you have to create a file maintenance program. WebSmart can create the file maintenance programs for you in minutes, leaving you more time to do the more important and less tedious job of actually writing a real program.”

**BCD:** *How would you grade BCD’s effort, A through F?*

**Carter:** “Overall I would give them an A. They have excellent tech support. If you call, they pick up the phone immediately—no voice mail. If you have a big issue they will research it and get back to you quickly—like in a day. BCD also has Live Web Demos, which allows them to actually look at our screen instead of having to describe the problem over the phone.

No one else has done that, not even IBM or Microsoft.”



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