Snapshots
in Productivity

10 Questions for

Gary Stewart,
AS/400 Applications Development and Support Manager
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on
ProGen WebSmart: iSeries-Web application development/deployment tool.

In the 1950's Hickory Farms was founded by one man who sold beef sticks and cheese at fairs and trade shows. Still privately held, Maumee, Ohio-based Hickory Farms is the nation's premier specialty food and gift retailer. It has grown into a nation-wide network of company-owned and franchised seasonal stores. Resident on Hickory Farms' AS/400, model 720 is SSA Global Technologies BPCS Supply Chain and Order Processing software, Infinium HR and Payroll applications, and other systems.

HICKORY FARMS®

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

Stewart: "Following an onsite training class we developed a Kiosk Management System for our retail group to help them with their very busy fall, Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday season. For Human Resources we have written add on components, and we have developed a system to facilitate EDI Inquiries. We also wrote a purchasing and quotations system."

BCD: *What led to your selection of WebSmart?*

Stewart: "We needed to be able to communicate with a large number of people who travel between our seasonal retail stores, kiosks, and home offices. We had to share AS/400 resident data with them and the Internet seemed to be the answer.

We had less than a month to get some very high profile mission critical applications up and running. We needed a tool that gave us the horsepower to get it done pronto. WebSmart was the answer."

BCD: *Did you evaluate any competitive products?*

Stewart: "We looked at several different tools, but it finally came down to WebSmart and WebSphere. WebSmart has a much faster ramp up than WebSphere, plus we could be productive with our existing AS/400 RPG programming staff."

BCD: *Was WebSmart easy to use?*

Stewart: "It was a piece of cake!"

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

Stewart: "We received excellent support and excellent training. WebSmart is easy to use and the manuals are easy to understand and no hardware upgrade was necessary.

And, WebSmart produced 100% of the generated code."

BCD: *How much traffic do these sites see?*

Stewart: "A large part of our business is seasonal. We are starting to open over 700 stores for the Thanksgiving and Christmas season and these stores have kiosks. We are getting orders in all the time. In our business, there is no room for error. These WebSmart applications are working fabulously well for us."

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

Stewart: "We are now. After we started using WebSmart, we bought Nexus, the portal for WebSmart. We also have Docu-Mint and ProGen Plus."

BCD: *Did BCD's Technical Support team give you satisfactory answers when you called them?*

Stewart: "Absolutely. Their support is wonderful. They know the product, and they always have an answer to whatever question we ask them."

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

Stewart: "Sometimes IT professionals invest needless hours performing due diligence, trying to find the right product to fit a specific need. WebSmart has to be the best kept secret in the AS/400 world, otherwise everyone would be using it."

BCD: *Please grade your experience with BCD and WebSmart using the scale A through F.*

Stewart: "Is there a grade higher than A? How about an A+++."