Snapshots
in Productivity

BCD Business Computer Design

10 Questions for

Paul Cree
Senior Supervisor of Programming
Nippon Express   http://www.nipponexpressusa.com

on
ProGen WebSmart: iSeries-Web application development/deployment tool.

Nippon Express USA is a member of the Nippon Express Group, a world leader in global freight forwarding.

NIPPON EXPRESS USA, INC.

Nippon Express USA offers supply chain management services through 67 offices that serve 47 cities in 31 states. Its custom transportation and distribution solutions include the movement of freight over land, sea, and air. ISO 9002 standards for quality operations are being fully met by leading Nippon Express USA offices. Nippon Express exploits myriad technologies, including the Internet to improve the way in which shipping orders and other forms of data are transmitted. Its core distribution applications reside in an IBM iSeries model 825.

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

Cree: "We developed a system that lets our customers request pick up and delivery of items for shipping. We had BCD develop a parts delivery system for Mazda. Customers place orders with various suppliers for parts in the US and Europe and once those parts are made, they are shipped to facilities in the manufacturing supply chain. We developed a website to manage that. Our representatives used to have to call Mazda's suppliers to see if the parts were ready."

BCD: ***Did you evaluate any competitive products?***

Cree: "We looked at WebSphere but we didn't have the Java skills in house to do the type of programming that was required. WebSphere also seemed very difficult to use-- it would have required a bigger processor than the one we had. It was much easier for us to pick up the WebSmart platform. We also looked at Seagull's products to create programs from RPG code-- these were screen scraper type programs. They were fairly expensive and wouldn't have given us the same functionality."

BCD: *Was WebSmart easy to use?*

Cree: "I'm a pretty good programmer-- in three or four days I was able to do something productive with it. If you are already an RPG programmer you need to understand a little HTML and Java script coding. Beyond that it's relatively easy to get people on board with WebSmart."

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

Cree: "We are still introducing it to our customers and its getting used more and more. The site we developed for Mazda is successful and is now getting rolled out to Nippon Express Europe."

BCD: *Have you received feedback from your customers who use the sites?*

Cree: "We get lots of feedback from our customers and sales people – and they like it very much. Besides that, we know how it is working well for us based on often these sites are being accessed."

BCD: *Do you plan to use WebSmart for future development?*

Cree: "We are in constant development with WebSmart and have lots of things to use it on. It has become part of our core development tool suite."

BCD: *Where do you see the most value in the applications you've developed with WebSmart?*

Cree: "The value to us is that it saves us money on customer support. The value to customers is that they have instant access to information. Right now we are offering incentives to get our customers to use the site even more."

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

Cree: "I haven't stumped them yet. They're pretty good."

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

Cree: "If it fits into their environment and they are running an AS/400, it's one of the quickest ways I know of getting web based applications into production."

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

Cree: "It fits in perfectly with the way we develop. I'd have to give BCD and WebSmart both an A."