

Deutscher Direktmarketing Verband prizes IBM online submissions solution.

Overview

■ Challenge

Reduce manual labor involved in operating annual direct marketing awards program and streamline the submission process for entrants

■ Why IBM?

A prominent member of the DDV, IBM offered its Express software tools with the needed performance and scalability at a price the DDV could afford

■ Solution

Automated, self-service, Web-based entry submission solution that eliminates paperwork for entrants

■ Key Benefits

33% increase in number of campaigns submitted and a 36% increase in number of member firms entering the competition; easy handling of increased submissions with no increase in staff level



Increasing by one-third their participation in the annual awards competitions, members of the DDV have voted their approval of the new online submission solution for awards applications.

Part craft and part science, direct marketing continues to evolve by convincing customers to buy directly from the media it uses. By providing a vehicle that customers can use to click, phone or mail their response to the seller, direct marketing knows when it succeeds and when it doesn't. When it is very good, direct marketing advertising wins awards, such as those given out annually by the Deutscher Direktmarketing Verband e.V. (DDV)—Germany's direct marketing association.

“It's easy to spot a winner in the world of direct marketing. And with the help of IBM and ARS, we have a winning solution that will help make our awards competition a shining example of the work we encourage.”

—Martina Rambach, Project Manager,
Public Relations, DDV



Registering for the competition and submitting media files for campaigns now take only a few minutes.

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–Martina Rambach

Representing the interests of almost 900 advertising agency and corporate members, the Wiesbaden, Germany-based DDV works at stewarding the quality standards of direct marketing in Germany. With its 12 employees, it also helps build a positive image of direct marketing and serves as a liaison between industry and consumers.

One of DDV's highest-profile activities is its annual awards program. Member agencies submit entries representing their capabilities in hopes of winning gold, silver or bronze trophies.

In the past, members submitted their entries manually, which created a great deal of paperwork for both members and jurors. Recently, the DDV worked with one of its prominent members, IBM, and IBM Business Partner ARS Computer and Consulting GmbH to create an online submission entry application that members could use to enter the competition and submit their projects.

Automating the submission process

To run its online application, which is hosted at a third-party site, the DDV chose IBM DB2® Universal Database™ Express Edition; IBM WebSphere Application Server – Express; and SUSE LINUX® Professional 9.1. ARS designed and implemented the solution using IBM Rational® Application Developer for WebSphere® (formerly known as IBM WebSphere Studio Application Developer), JavaServer Faces and Service Data Objects.

The DDV has implemented the entry application, but not the judging side. However, with the simplification and automation of the entry process, more companies have entered the competition and have submitted more entries. The DDV had 330 campaigns and 120 participating agencies in the 2004 competition; for the 2005 competition, those numbers increased to 450 campaigns (36 percent increase) and 160 participating agencies (33 percent increase).

The new IBM-based technology enables the DDV to handle the increased volume of projects much more easily, with no staff increases. When the judging components of the application are finished, the organization expects the length of that process to decrease from three days to one.

"We chose the Express editions of IBM DB2 Universal Database and IBM WebSphere Application Server because they offered the scalability and performance we needed for our project and are reasonably priced for an organization like the DDV," says Martina Rambach, DDV project manager, public relations.

Providing a vehicle for direct response

With the new electronic submission process, agencies can now register themselves and receive user names and passwords that allow them to begin the submission process. After logging in, contestants receive an overview page that lists their agency's campaigns. From this point, they can enter a new campaign by completing a form with key campaign information. The contestants then submit electronic files containing images and audio and video tracks of their creative efforts.

ARS designed a robust database structure to manage this content, using JavaServer Pages with JavaServer Faces components to design and implement appropriate page codes.

JavaServer Faces simplifies the building of user interfaces with an easy-to-use programming model for users of varying skills. Similarly, Service Data Objects enables the DDV to take advantage of reusable programming models to create access to stored data. "JavaServer Faces and Service Data Objects are exciting new technologies that we wanted to use in order to create a cutting-edge application," says Dietmar Rager, ARS senior consultant. "It's great that DB2 Express and WebSphere Application Server – Express support these new industry-standard technologies."

Easy to install and administer

The application runs during the competition period, within in a frame of DDV's Web site. ARS installed the DB2 database and WebSphere Application Server software on a remote, dedicated server. ARS also installed a DB2 software-based runtime client, indexed the database and installed front-end access to the tables.

DB2 Universal Database Express Edition features self-tuning and self-configuring capabilities for ease of manageability. "Both installation and administration are easy with DB2 and WebSphere Express," says Rager. "Producing nightly backups for the database remotely is a simple command line operation."

Key Components

Software

- IBM DB2 Universal Database Express Edition, Version 8.2
- IBM Rational Application Developer for WebSphere
- IBM WebSphere Application Server – Express
- SUSE LINUX Professional 9.1

Business Partners

- ARS Computer and Consulting GmbH
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*–Dietmar Rager, Senior Consultant,
ARS Computer and Consulting GmbH*

Accelerated Time to Value

Support for Linux is another feature of the IBM software that the DDV appreciates. "We like the cost effectiveness and stability of Linux," says Rambach. "Frankly, Linux was the only option offered by our hosting provider, but fortunately, that was no problem because of the flexibility of the IBM software and its well-documented support for Linux."

IBM WebSphere Application Server – Express and DB2 Universal Database Express Edition also support popular integrated development environments to accelerate time to market for new applications, using open standards. ARS was involved in the beta test for Rational Application Developer for WebSphere, using the product to test the DDV submission application in its early phases. "The Rational product helped us refine the application and we helped IBM in its development of Rational Application Developer for WebSphere," says Rambach. "It was typical of the way IBM provides resources to smooth the way for its customers."

Crafting a high-quality solution

As the DDV continues to work on completing its entry submission application, it is enjoying the security, high performance and low cost of its DB2, WebSphere and Linux solution. It is also pleased that the new solution strengthens the association's customer relationship management (CRM) efforts, because the DDV can safely store crucial agency information in its DB2 database where employees can access it at any time.

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For more information

Please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner.

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For more information on DDV, visit:

www.ddv.de/english

For more information on ARS

Computer and Consulting GmbH, visit:

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