

To supply consumers and partners with critical information about its products, Shimano built a worldwide Internet presence consisting of 20 distinct regional web sites. The challenge was to preserve the uniformity of site content and the underlying enabling technologies, without compromising a distinct regional focus. A streamlined system for all web properties would improve the effectiveness of product marketing while reducing costs and labor.

## Shimano Unifies its Global Internet Presence

Since the 1930s, Shimano has been one of the world's top suppliers of sporting equipment, largely known for its contributions to the advancement of bicycle racing technology. The company conducts business on a global scale, with over 5500 employees spread across 17 nations.



### Project Goals and Challenges

**Goals:** Each Shimano site is managed independently by its respective region. This gives each office a considerable amount of autonomy in determining what products to sell, and how to take those products to market. From a customer perspective, this autonomy was reflected in the different appearances of all many Shimano sites. This made it very difficult to preserve global brand recognition and enforce uniform web marketing strategies for the products. Shimano required a solution that would allow it to consolidate digital assets, while still providing regional offices with the flexibility to provide content for their specific markets.

It was also important for Shimano to keep current product information on the web for both consumers and channel partners. The company had been using static content publishing, which significantly lengthened the time needed to publish accurate information on the web site. Coupled with the lack of collaborative technology, Shimano products could hit the market, yet not appear on the web site until two or three months later.

**Challenges:** Shimano decided that the implementation of a content management solution would be necessary to transform its global organization into a virtual enterprise. Web strategies needed to be implemented in a centralized manner, utilizing a common platform. After a thorough evaluation process, Shimano chose Day's Communiqué. One of Shimano's primary evaluation requirements was an open architecture. Drawing from industry standards, Communiqué is a 100% Java application that is J2EE compliant and supports leading application servers.

For Shimano, this meant a great deal of flexibility going forward. Also, Communiqué is not bound to specific file formats, which enables cross-platform application sharing.

Open extensibility was also an important consideration. Shimano required a development environment that would allow it to extend and customize web applications with features such as design templates and migration tools.

## Communiqué Solution

For Shimano, Communiqué's ease of use has been one of the biggest benefits. The software is highly intuitive, so any business user can create and edit complex pages of text, graphics and multimedia it with a minimal learning curve. "Since we don't have an internal development staff, it's a tremendous cost savings to author and publish content without having to engage any technical consultants or IT staff," said Robert Morris, Shimano Web Team Manager. "We expect to have enormous cost savings going forward."

Shimano is also experiencing increased efficiency and productivity with Communiqué. Product templates and wizards separate design from content, enabling Shimano's designers to focus on style and layout, while business content authors create and maintain web site content. This has allowed the company to leverage its personnel resources based on their areas of expertise, thus lowering implementation and ongoing maintenance costs.

A substantially accelerated content time to market using Communiqué's publishing capabilities is another big advantage for Shimano. After source content is authored or modified, these changes are automatically published to all other views where that content resides. For example, two regional websites need to publish a page for a new product. That specific product's textual, visual and multimedia content can be stored centrally. When changes to that central content are made anyone using it in the regional sites will receive automatic updates. New product information and product updates are made available in real time across all regional web sites.

Shimano can also allow distinct regional site marketing while centrally maintaining the standard "look and feel" that is essential to the protection of their very successful brand.



"A cohesive web presence is vital to the preservation of Shimano's market leadership, the gracefulness of the Day solution helps to unify our web strategies, while providing the added benefits of cost savings and increased efficiencies. We definitely intend to expand our use of the product in the future - providing more value to our channel partners by creating transactional product catalogs and leveraging Communiqué's personalization capabilities to deliver custom content based on user profiles."

Robert Morris, Manager of Shimano's World Wide Web Team

## Shimano Network Snapshot

- Windows 2000 Advanced Server
- Intel based web servers running Pentium III processors
- Implemented on both IIS and Apache for windows
- Black box Intel single processors for the Communiqué instances
- Internal development environment on similar boxes
- All instances run on same machines
- SQL 2000 database connectivity with JDBC driver for Communiqué
- All boxes are 3-4GB RAM, SCSI 160 drives