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Software helps Haworth inform dealers

By PATRICK REVERE | Staff writer
Holland-based office furniture manufacturer Haworth has improved communications with its dealers by implementing an IBM software package that offers real-time information on orders, pricing, product information, marketing and sales.

"From a customer standpoint, one of the advantages they will have is that rather than having dealers calling our customer service department for questions on products, they now can look it up and have the information right at their fingertips," said Javier Revilla, Haworth's application development and support manager for information services.

IBM worked with Ascendant Technology of Chicago to implement WebSphere Portal and Lotus Workplace to develop a dealer network that is accessible on the Internet. Haworth had tried for more than two years to set up a similar service with Oracle technology before turning to IBM.

Julie Smith, a Haworth spokeswoman, said the new software was purchased by the company at the request of dealers who felt they were spending too much time on the telephone awaiting answers to simple questions.

Mike Stock, the dealer network manager, said the previous program with Oracle averaged 12 visitors a month from a pair of Haworth dealers. Since the IBM software was implemented in October, the site has received more than 4 million visits from 21 countries.

Smith said the change will have no effect on the number of employees in Haworth's customer service department.

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