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## Ascendant and IBM Team on Portal Application

03/15/2005

IBM and Ascendant Technology today announced that Haworth, Inc., a global manufacturer of office furniture and adaptable workspace environments, has "transformed its business operations with an enhanced IT infrastructure that enables them to communicate and exchange secure, real-time business information" with its worldwide network of independent furniture dealers.

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Haworth reportedly implemented a new online portal application that allows them to more easily interact with

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its dealers and enables them to gain access to information including financial data, inventory and product information in real-time. As a result, Haworth is said to have increased sales and significantly improved its business process efficiency with enhanced customer service.

Prior to adopting the IBM and Ascendant Technology on-demand portal solution, a release said Haworth's sales representatives spent more than 30 minutes on each customer call, manually looking up information from disparate sources such as product availability, pricing and order status.

Haworth reportedly replaced its existing Oracle Portal for dNet, developed by Ascendant Technology and based on IBM WebSphere Portal and IBM Lotus Workplace for Web Content Management.

"The Oracle Portal did not offer secure single sign-on capabilities, making it difficult for Haworth's customers to manage separate sessions and view sensitive content such as financial information with confidence. The customer-maintained portal access and authentication process, written by Ascendant Technology, allows Haworth's customers to sign on and securely obtain specific financial and pricing data," a press release said.

"Haworth chose the joint IBM and Ascendant Technology solution after two years of unsuccessful attempts to implement an effective, secure and efficient portal that could help the company effectively synchronize product collateral and communicate with its customers," the release added.

"The Java-based IBM and Ascendant Technology portal solution has allowed us to fundamentally change the way we communicate with dealers and internal employees," said Mike Stock, dNet Manager, Haworth. "We needed a scalable Web-based solution that would serve as a primary means of secure, on demand communication between Haworth and our dealer network. Prior to deploying the joint IBM and Ascendent solution, dNet averaged 12 visitors a month from a couple of dealerships. In the six months following the implementation we had more than four million hits in over 21 countries, which far surpassed our expectations and transformed the way we do business," said Stock.

"Teaming with IBM was critical in signing Haworth," said Jim Deters, managing partner, Ascendant Technology. "By combining Ascendant Technology's technical and industry expertise with IBM's open middleware, our solution architects were able to work with IBM to deliver a customized portal solution to meet all of Haworth's business needs. Access to IBM's technical resources, such as its Innovation Center, along with working closely with IBM's marketing and sales teams, has opened the door to new markets and opportunities for us."

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