



Sony e-Commerce Solution Design Powered by Catapult Experience

Catapult expertise helps Sony meet deadlines and increased revenue figures by targeted dates

Sony Electronics launched a major e-commerce initiative to create a customizable, world-class Internet platform for the direct sales of electronic products and solutions. Goals ranged from increasing direct sales in new and established markets to strengthening customer relationships at all points of the customer lifecycle. Both business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) markets were targeted.

This e-commerce platform represented a new direction for Sony Electronics. Although 60% of their direct sales are online, the initiative involved reaching new segments in a number of markets, including small to medium-sized businesses, government and education. The initiative also involved the creation of a new organizational group within Sony to manage and support the platform.

Aside from the magnitude and complexity of the platform, the project presented a special challenge in terms of extremely tight deadlines to keep pace with the initiative. Sony knew they needed outside resources to ensure that they met their deadlines and increased revenue figures according to target dates.

Based on a careful evaluation of experience, business expertise and technical knowledge, Sony selected Catapult Systems to assist in the e-commerce initiative.

How Catapult Systems Helped

Catapult led the e-commerce initiative team to clearly define a vision for the final application.

Completing this critical milestone thoroughly, yet quickly, enabled Sony to move confidently into defining the application details on schedule.

The Catapult team next managed the definition of the final application's functionality by mapping out specific business processes, identifying stakeholders, conducting interviews and organizing project milestones.

As Doug Sylvester, Project Manager for Catapult, explained, "We were able to instantly add value because we already had a great deal of e-commerce and platform development experience. This included a well-defined process that we used to funnel our findings down from the 10,000 foot level into actionable items. That way, we could rapidly organize everything according to plan."

Freeman agreed about the value of Catapult's experience. "They're very quick to learn. They brought a depth and scope of understanding to the project that helped them understand our requirements and rapidly transform them into finished deliverables."

Sylvester also stressed that Catapult worked specifically within the Sony Delivery Framework, a software development process. "By using their own process, we enabled Sony to take advantage of our experience in a format that their developers could actually write code against."

Part of the challenge Sony faced was the sheer number of stakeholders involved the project. Catapult's experience enabled them to quickly identify which information was critical to the initiative's success. "They knew the right questions to ask," said Freeman. "They understood our customer lifecycle and what we were trying to accomplish in terms of customer acquisition, development and retention. Then they used that understanding as a high-level guide in every deliverable they created."

Catapult also provided a unique ability to work with both business and technology professionals. This was critical in helping to create the Internet Properties Group, the Sony team which would manage and support the new platform. Organizing this group involved conducting extensive interviews, gathering requirements, developing strategies for reaching the markets, understanding both immediate and long-term goals and gaining consensus from a wide range of individuals and departments.

Results

Sony leveraged Catapult's knowledge of large systems with many transactions and many users to ultimately launch an entirely new e-commerce solution that fully met the business and technical requirements of the company. The solution enabled Sony to:

- Streamline B2B sales by creating an effective direct sales channel.

- Reduce cost of order creation and processing by adding ability for B2C customers to place orders online themselves.
- Offer a more efficient and effective quote process. Customers can now obtain customized, accurate quotes online.
- Empower customers through self-service opportunities, including account management.
- Improve customer relationships through increased Call Center customer insight.

“ The Catapult consultants did a great job guiding us through the project. They didn't tell people how to do their business, but helped them translate how they do business today to how they could do it even better online. ”

*Andrew Freeman
VP, Internet Properties and Management,
Sony Electronics*