



A Sleeker Process That Speeds Revenue

Fashion is a fast-paced business, and the technology that keeps it all moving down the runway needs to be ready for anything. For one world-renowned fashion design brand, that meant having the ability to easily make emergency price changes on one or more of its e-commerce websites.

Client

**HIGH-END FASHION
ONLINE RETAILER**

Category

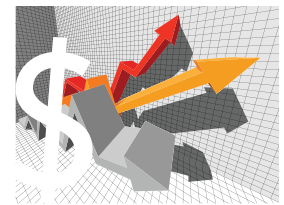
**CUSTOM APPLICATION
DEVELOPMENT**



THE GOAL:

AUTOMATED PROCESS FOR PRICE CHANGES ON WEBSITES

Our client, an international leader in fashion, fragrances, and home décor, asked Bridge360 to automate their existing process for making price changes to its sites, whereby merchants submit permanent price changes, markdowns, and temporary sale pricing. To automate the process, we needed to add features to the existing Silverlight application that the e-commerce division uses to manage the data and content workflow feeding into the company's websites.



THE CHALLENGE:

REPLACE EXISTING MANUAL PROCESS WITH AUTOMATED, SOX-COMPLIANT SYSTEM

The existing process involved manually loading pricing data from a spreadsheet into an application database where the information would get picked up and submitted to the main website through a data feed.

The entire original business process relied upon one or two individuals who had both the knowledge and the access to load pricing information into the correct application database. This created a single point of failure that could have a potentially large impact on the company's bottom line, as it directly affected pricing and therefore revenue from the retailer's online store.



Explicit approval for each price change also had to be recorded in order to comply with traceability requirements of Sarbanes-Oxley. The formal approval for each price change is required to come from one of the Head Buyers in the e-commerce division. Individuals in the Head Buyer role are often mobile and not necessarily connected to the company's internal network through VPN or other means. The only reliable form of communication was through the company's corporate email system.

Because of the formal approval requirement, price changes could not be sent through the data feed to the website until the approval had been recorded. This meant that some type of workflow mechanism had to be built to store pricing information but prevent it from being submitted to the website feed until the approval transaction was complete.

The pricing data feed to the e-commerce website is only run once per day, which means that the entire process is very sensitive to timing.

OUR STEPS TO SUCCESS:

PARTNERSHIP, INTEGRATION, VALIDATION

After working with the luxury retailer's e-commerce team to solidify requirements, we partnered with their internal IT department to make the appropriate changes to domain infrastructure and email systems. To accommodate the mobile work environment of the Head Buyers, we built a back-end application process that was capable of sending, receiving, and processing email.

The new automated system broadcasts by email a notification of price change submission, processes an approval email response, and broadcasts a final confirmation once the full transaction is complete.

We also learned the Microsoft API required to subscribe to email push notifications from Exchange as well as interact directly with Exchange mailboxes, and built a back-end plug-in architecture for the processing of email messages sent to a specific mailbox.

Finally, we collaborated with our client's development resources to build the Silverlight user interface for submission and validation of price change spreadsheets, and continued to work closely with their team to debug issues and verify solutions.



THE RESULT:

A SEAMLESS NEW OUTFIT FOR AN INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT'S PRICE CHANGE SYSTEM

With the assistance of our client's internal teams, Bridge360 designed, built, and deployed changes to the Silverlight application to include the price change workflow features now successfully employed in the production system, eliminating a bottleneck and enabling a smoother process.

