



SHERWIN-WILLIAMS CONSUMER GROUP TAKES ON ROSY HUE WITH HELP FROM RED HAT

FAST FACTS

Industry	Paint and Coatings
Geography	Global
Opportunity	To develop and deploy functionally rich Web applications using a standards-based platform supported by a single vendor for both home office and field use
Software	Red Hat Enterprise Linux, JBoss Enterprise Middleware
Migration Path	HP/UX and Windows to Red Hat Enterprise Linux
Hardware	x86 servers
Benefits	Improve time to market of mission-critical applications. Increase staff productivity and efficiency using JBoss Enterprise Middleware. Higher-quality applications.



BACKGROUND

Founded in 1866, The Sherwin-Williams Company is a global leader in the manufacture, development, distribution, and sale of coatings and related products to professional, industrial, commercial, and retail customers around the world. The company manufactures products under well-known brands such as Sherwin-Williams®, Dutch Boy®, Krylon®, Minwax®, Thompson's® Water Seal®, and many more.

For more than 143 years, Sherwin-Williams has been committed to making and marketing innovative products of superior quality; operating a safe, clean and friendly workplace while observing the highest ethical standards in business conduct.

With global headquarters in Cleveland, Ohio Sherwin-Williams branded products are sold exclusively through a chain of more than 3,300 company-operated stores and facilities, while the company's other brands are sold through leading mass merchandisers, home centers, independent paint dealers, hardware stores, automotive retailers, and industrial distributors.

The Sherwin-Williams Global Group distributes a wide range of products in more than 30 countries around the world. For more information, visit www.sherwin.com.

“JBoss has been a great fit for solving our primary business and technical challenges. We’ve accelerated the process of getting developers trained and up to speed. We’ve managed to get our arms around a vast set of web technologies by limiting our scope while providing our business users with the applications they need to be successful.”

-Alan Flowers, manager of Java-Web-Integration Services team at Sherwin-Williams

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Sherwin-Williams operates in three segments: Paint Stores Group, Consumer Group, and Global Finishes Group. The Consumer Group segment engages in the development, manufacture, and distribution of paints, coatings, and related products to third party customers primarily in the United States and Canada, as well as to the Paint Stores Group.

In 2005, the Consumer Group segment of The Sherwin-Williams Company migrated its web application infrastructure from a combination of HP/UX and Windows to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, primarily for standardization and reliability reasons. Last year, the Consumer Group embarked on an ambitious plan to develop web applications that run in a standard browser in this environment. Among other goals, Sherwin-Williams wanted this standard platform to create a new portfolio of applications to promote operational excellence and green initiatives.

“We hoped to create a desktop-like user experience even though these would be Web applications,” said Alan Flowers, manager of the Java-Web-Integration Services team at Sherwin-Williams. Among other criteria, “we needed something we could support over the long term and sought a trusted relationship with our main vendor,” he said.

Sherwin-Williams was pleased with both the quality of the technology and the “excellent” level of support received from Red Hat for their infrastructure deployment. Flowers didn’t hesitate to evaluate JBoss Enterprise Middleware when it came time to consider a middleware platform.

SOLUTION

After bringing JBoss in-house and putting it through a rigorous due diligence process, Flowers was satisfied he’d found a suitable solution. “Given our existing commitment to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, our business goals and our desire to be very forward-thinking in our approach to Web applications, JBoss was the logical choice,” he said. Today, Sherwin-Williams is using JBoss Enterprise Middleware, specifically JBoss Developer Studio and JBoss Enterprise Application Platform, in addition to running its Web IT infrastructure on Red Hat Enterprise Linux.

Especially helpful was the fact that members of the Red Hat team did more than just fulfill the sales order; they provided Sherwin-Williams with strategic planning advice. “Red Hat sent experienced professionals over who had an in-depth knowledge of the Jboss offerings,” said Flowers. “We outlined what we were trying to accomplish, talked about our future plans, and were introduced to JBoss’ integrated development environment. This gave us a great head start. You can get plagued about what to use, what not to use, and what will be around down the road.” By standardizing on the Red Hat product line, “we know our platform, we know it will be supported, and we can get our people up to speed quickly and efficiently,” he said.

Flowers also liked the access he was given to senior Red Hat and JBoss engineers. As part of his due diligence, he attended JBoss World, the JBoss annual user conference, last year, and was “pleased to meet the actual engineers who created the products I’d be using,” he said. “That kind of direct access is rare among top-tier IT vendors.”



BENEFITS

One of the benefits of adopting JBoss has been a development cycle time savings. "One of our primary goals was to create a swift Web development environment," said Tracey Richards, manager of Electronic Commerce Services for Sherwin-Williams. "We've now begun to reach that goal."

"We attended training, defined our scope, and documented our standards in preparation for development using JBoss," said Flowers. Sherwin-Williams has also been able to reduce its overall technology portfolio. Since AJAX is embedded in the JBoss middleware stack and developers don't have to deal with Java scripting, there is less code to manage and maintain.

"We were already satisfied with Red Hat and this contributed to the decision to use JBoss for our middleware needs."

Implementing a standards-based platform from one technology provider was a critical driver of Sherwin-Williams' decision to go with JBoss. "Since we were developing business-critical systems, we wanted a single vendor to support the entire software stack, from top to bottom," said Richards.

"We feel confident developing Web applications having the applications stack and operating system from the same vendor," agreed Flowers. "Whether we get our account manager on the phone, or a Linux or JBoss expert, we're certain that we will be well served."

"JBoss has been a great fit for solving our primary business and technical challenges," said Flowers. "We've accelerated the process of getting developers trained and up to speed. We've managed to get our arms around a vast set of web technologies by limiting our scope while providing our business users with the applications they need to be successful."



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