

CustomCommerce Feature Overview

TechniCon's CustomCommerce allows manufacturers to provide product catalogs, guided sales systems, product sizing applications and dimensionally accurate CAD models to their customers via the Internet.

- CustomCommerce offers your sales staff and customers real-time, 24/7 access to products and information.
- CustomCommerce allows you to create a compelling sell-side e-commerce solution, supporting multiple online channels to target specific industries and customer segments.
- CustomCommerce facilitates the creation and maintenance of custom catalogs, which combined with on-demand printing, reduce document production costs.
- CustomCommerce dramatically improves product selection, resulting in faster sales cycles, fewer returns, reduced costs and increased customer satisfaction.

Key CustomCommerce features include:

- Leveraging of your legacy data. CustomCommerce can extract and automatically repurpose existing data, such as product descriptions, classifications, feature sets, configuration rules and CAD files.
- Easy integration with ERP, CAD, order status, billing, and corporate purchasing systems, including Ariba and Oracle Exchange.
- Downloadable, dimensionally accurate CAD drawings and models in the formats you and your customers use.
- Web compliance, allowing CustomCommerce to be "co-branded" with your company's Web site design and navigation scheme to match your overall Web strategy.

CustomCommerce provides functionality in four broad areas:

- Guided Sales Systems
- Product Visualization and Documentation
- Catalog Creation
- Transactions and Sales

Combined, these functions provide a flexible platform for a wide variety of applications, from complete e-commerce solutions to support your sales effort to internal build-to-order systems for your engineers.

GUIDED SALES SYSTEMS

Incorporating a rich set of cataloging, search and configuration functions; CustomCommerce guides customers through the often difficult task of selecting complex products. Replicating the expertise of a manufacturer's best salesperson, the system engages users in a dialog, allowing them to specify a range of application-specific constraints for their particular problem.

■ Catalog

Using CustomCommerce's catalog features, manufacturers can target their product offerings and capabilities in a variety of formats to distinct customer groups. The customer-facing catalog structure allows buyers to browse through the defined product taxonomy and view specific item details, including names, features, options¹, descriptions, PDFs and images. The catalog features provide for:

- Product hierarchal trees that allow product selection from general to specific characteristics. CustomCommerce offers an unlimited number of tree structures to allow for customer and distributor-specific taxonomies, and supports standards such as the UN/SPSC classification scheme.

¹ A feature is a classification or type of the product, such as a linear actuator. A product option is a modifiable characteristic, such as an actuator's bore size.

- The ability to add multiple graphics, multimedia files, PDFs, HTML and CAD files to the catalog across the entire hierarchy of product groupings, families and parts.
- The ability to cross-reference a manufacturer part number to the equivalent customer part number or name, allowing customers to order by their customer-specific part number. This allows a customer to use a simplified naming convention.
- The ability to cross-reference a manufacturer part number to another manufacturer's part number.
- Manufacturer-specific "smart" part numbers. These part numbers are uniquely configured and typically used to automatically enter orders into ERP and order entry systems.
- Historical price lists and customer-specific pricing. Products and product options can have any number of associated price lists. Percentage and tier-based discounting are supported.
- "Virtual price lists." Virtual lists are generated by applying pricing models across static price lists, allow multiple adjustments to be made to prices and can be saved to create new static price lists.
- Support for any number of feature and option sets on a particular item. These sets may describe a feature or the type of object (e.g. a linear actuator) or any product option (e.g. the actuator bore size).
- Unrestricted and arbitrarily deep option sets which can be shared across multiple products, e.g. a set of fabric options used for many lines of chairs.
- Product descriptions of any length, including HTML tags to allow for rich content formatting.
- Internationalization, including support for local languages, currencies and date formats.
- Native-directory integration with existing enterprise directories and databases (LDAP, Windows directory services and SQL) for authentication purposes.
- The collection of flexible and extensible customer information, including contact data and Web site activity tracking.

■ **Search**

CustomCommerce's advanced search capabilities lead customers to the correct products every time. These capabilities include:

- Searches by product description, name, item number, options, features and feature comparisons.
- Parametric searches, allowing knowledgeable customers to set filters on a range of features to find the products that best meet their needs. If no products satisfy the selected parameters, the system can return a table of "near-matches," i.e. products that meet some subset of the parameters.
- Industry-specific wizards and sizing applications that allow customers to select products using their own terms. For example, an engineer enters values to locate a pneumatic device capable of providing 100 pounds of thrust and 3 inches of travel.
- Guided searches on a set of defined attribute values, using a sequential process of elimination to select a product that meets a customer's particular needs.
- Keyword searches through product documentation. When keywords are misspelled, the search checks for similar words to find results. Stemming is supported, e.g. a search for "actuator" can also return results for "actuated" or "actuating."
- Side-by-side comparisons of products returned by a search.
- Product cross-referencing, allowing a customer to find a product in the catalog using their own or another manufacturer's product or stock number.

■ **Configuration**

The product configurator allows users to easily assemble product solutions and customize them by applying product and option rules. These features include:

- Flagging incompatible options and highlighting prior options that are incompatible with the current option.

- Providing context-appropriate help messages and up and cross-selling suggestions.
- Providing graphics and animations to aid in the configuration process, including 2D drawings, 3D models and dimensionally accurate, downloadable CAD files.
- Supporting the use of spatial relationships and rules for configurations, allowing layout and assembly of multiple products to arrive at integrated solutions.
- Supporting complex pricing models that allow multiple price lists to be associated with any product option, including customer-specific pricing and percentage and tier-based discounting.
- Supporting the import of external and legacy configuration data and rules into the CustomCommerce configuration models.
- Generating order-ready quotes, including accessing the latest product and pricing information from ERP and other back-end systems to ensure quote accuracy.

▪ Custom Catalog

Using TechniCon's custom catalog tools, product catalogs can be easily tailored to fit the needs of your largest accounts. Custom catalogs can ensure your customers' purchases are always "on contract," and help communicate their standards programs to outside consultants. You can:

- Provide customer-specific catalogs containing only those products and options approved by the customer.
- Specify customer-specific pricing for products and associated options.
- Present only contracted products and options, requiring the customer to renegotiate the contract to take advantage of product enhancements.
- Use CustomCommerce's authentication manager to determine which catalog a customer is entitled to browse and the customer-specific pricing.
- Provide custom catalogs for specific market segments and distributors.

CATALOG CREATION

TechniCon's ContentStudio application facilitates the creation and maintenance of CustomCommerce catalogs. Using an Explorer-type interface, you can create, customize and update hierarchical catalog trees that control all elements of your online content. From a common catalog repository, custom catalogs can be quickly built and easily maintained.

Key features include:

- Content can be extracted from all standard formats, such as text, CSV, SIF, PDF and CAD data.
- Commonly used content transformation rules can be defined and leveraged across multiple catalogs.
- Administrative functions are provided to set up user authentication and control content access and publication. Users are assigned role-based rights as viewers, editors and administrators.
- Catalog content is managed through an easy-to-use "tree view" interface. No programming is required.
- Balloon help is available to assist novice users.
- Common feature and option sets can be defined and applied across products and product lines, e.g. applying a maximum stroke feature across a group of actuators or a set of fabric options across a line of chairs.
- Comprehensive functions are used to add, delete, and edit product, classification and attribute data. For example, when a product is deleted, all associated attribute values are deleted.
- Intelligent drag-and-drop functionality automatically updates properties, such as feature sets, when a product is moved from one product group to another.
- ContentStudio data can be published to PDF files and publishing software to generate print catalogs.
- ContentStudio seamlessly integrates with CustomCommerce.

PRODUCT VISUALIZATION AND DOCUMENTATION

Interactive product visualization is the most effective way to present highly configurable products to customers. Realistic views of a product's options and features allow customers to accurately see what they're purchasing. TechniCon combines online visualization with on-demand documentation to deliver 3D CAD models and 2D drawings using customer-specified options, dimensions and file formats.

Product Visualization

TechniCon's product visualization technology has won Best Business Application at the Web3D Symposium and first place in the Business/Enterprise category of a developers contest sponsored by Silicon Graphics.

TechniCon's product visualization technology allows your customers to:

- Rotate, tilt and magnify screen-optimized product images with near-instant response.
- "Visually configure" products by interactively selecting and displaying different product sizes, colors and other options.
- Create photorealistic 3D renderings of configured products to highlight features difficult to view in lesser quality images.
- Be presented visually with options of which they would be otherwise unaware, greatly facilitating product up-selling.

By supporting a variety of drawing engines, CustomCommerce's visualization performance can be optimized based on criteria such as typical customer Web environments, underlying CAD data formats and image quality requirements. Custom catalogs from the same catalog repository can utilize different drawing engines as appropriate for their specific applications.

CAD Drawing / Model Generation

With CustomCommerce, your customers can conveniently download accurate 3D CAD models and 2D drawing files generated using options and dimensions specified by your customer.

CustomCommerce eliminates data conversion costs and delays by offering both industry standard formats and native support for all major mechanical CAD systems, including:

Native Formats

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| • AutoCAD® | • Autodesk Inventor® | • AutoCAD Mechanical |
| • CATIA® | • I-deas NX® | • NX® |
| • Pro/ENGINEER® | • Solid Edge® | • SolidWorks® |

Neutral Formats

- | | | |
|---------------|--------|--------------|
| • DXF™/DWG | • IGES | • Parasolid® |
| • SAT® (ACIS) | • STEP | • VDA |

For users of Autodesk Inventor, CustomCommerce's product configurator can programmatically drive Inventor to generate accurate 3D CAD models on-the-fly.

Other features include:

- A product's internal design content can be automatically removed, leaving only the external geometric envelope, to protect a company's intellectual property when publishing CAD data.
- TechniCon reduces the size of CAD and graphic files to significantly decrease file download times.
- CustomCommerce supports Autodesk's i-drop technology that allows CAD data to be dragged and dropped directly from a Web page into an i-drop-aware desktop drawing session.
- CustomCommerce can automatically generate CAD drawings for internal engineering and manufacturing use, and for the creation of assembly and installation diagrams.

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TRANSACTIONS

To support the sales process, CustomCommerce offers a unique Favorites function and a full-featured online shopping cart. To facilitate transactions, CustomCommerce integrates with order entry, billing and corporate purchasing systems.

■ Sales

CustomCommerce's Favorites function provides a flexible mechanism to store and organize customer data, such as configured products, quotes and order histories. The shopping cart facility allows customers to select products to purchase and pass orders and BOMs to order entry and ERP systems. Sales features include:

- Users can save custom product configurations and commonly purchased items into Favorites folders so these items can be easily selected in future catalog visits.
- Multiple Favorites folders can be created to organize product choices into user-definable categories, e.g. by project or location.
- Partially configured products can be stored in Favorites folders, allowing customers to fine tune products and options across many sessions.
- Shopping carts can be saved between sessions, allowing customers to return at a later time to finalize purchases.
- Multiple shopping carts can be simultaneously used and saved, allowing customers to segregate their cart contents by project or location.
- Favorites folders and shopping carts can be emailed to co-workers and other individuals for collaboration.
- You can control how to display an item in a shopping cart, e.g. an assembled product could be listed as a single unit or a list of components.
- Additional costs associated with a product can be automatically added to the shopping cart, e.g. installation up-charges.
- Bill-of-materials (BOM) files are automatically generated from the customer's selections.
- Order requests can be sent to the manufacturer as a plain text email, fax or via Web services, and in a number of formats, including XML, cXML, CDF and SIF.
- The shopping cart supports PayPal Payflow for online payment processing and UPS Online® Tools for shipping cost and address validation.

■ E-Procurement Connector

Using CustomCommerce's E-Procurement Connector, your customers' e-procurement "buyer" applications can be integrated with CustomCommerce catalogs containing customer-specific products, options and pricing.

Features of the E-Procurement Connector include:

- A customer using an e-procurement application; such as Ariba or Oracle Exchange; can be routed to a "punch out"-enabled CustomCommerce site to search, configure and purchase products.
- The e-procurement application's username and password credentials are used to provide a single-session sign-on.
- Authorizations established by the e-procurement application for order creation, editing and inspection are enforced.
- During punch-out sessions, customers can access CustomCommerce's full set of selection and configuration tools.
- BOM files accompany orders, allowing for easy integration with order entry systems.

The E-Procurement Connector earned Design Journal's Best of Show Award at NeoCon.

▪ **Integration**

CustomCommerce maximizes your existing investment in technology. Utilizing a “building block” approach, CustomCommerce leverages Web services, application program interfaces (APIs) and other technology standards to seamlessly route messages, transactions, content and other data within and outside the enterprise. Integration features include:

- Secure and scalable enterprise application integration using industry standard protocols.
- Legacy application data accessed at both the business content layer (e.g. Web pages, email, reports and unstructured text files) and the database layer.
- A generic and customizable document processing engine providing secure integration with external systems in a range of formats, including XML and cXML, through common transport protocols, such as HTTP and FTP.
- Security and rules in the integration engine that ensure only authorized users can perform specific actions during the processing of documents into or out of CustomCommerce.

SERVICES

TechniCon provides a full range of services to support our products and ensure the success of your system.

▪ **Application Hosting**

By providing the requisite hardware, software and staff, the TechniCon’s hosting service eliminates the need for you to invest in in-house equipment and personnel to manage your CustomCommerce system.

- TechniCon manages all aspects of the system including hardware, software, networking and security.
- TechniCon provides all system upgrades and maintenance.

▪ **Content Development**

Manufacturers often lack the extended attribute data required for a parametrically driven, content-rich commerce catalog. TechniCon offers a complete set of professional services to create the content needed to build a catalog.

- TechniCon content generation services include data entry, cleansing and normalization; scanning, CAD file creation and taxonomy formation.
- TechniCon’s creative talent works with you to match the “look and feel” of the catalog to your existing website. Layouts, colors, logos and fonts conform to your existing branding and identity programs.
- TechniCon can train you to use ContentStudio to maintain your catalog content in-house.

▪ **Technology Transfer**

TechniCon can work with your business and technical staffs to ensure all of your users achieve the maximum benefit from your CustomCommerce system.

- TechniCon offers comprehensive training on all of its products.
- ContentStudio lets business users manage product attributes and configuration rules without the need for programmers or IT production staff.
- TechniCon can provide your staff with the training and resources to maintain and fine-tune your CustomCommerce system yourselves.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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