# Case Study

## adidas America Equips Sales Teams with Powerful Wireless Sales Tool

**Company:** **adidas America** is part of a globally famous corporation that produces athletic footwear, clothing, accessories and equipment.

**Industry:** Retail / Wholesale

**Region:** Americas

**Company Size:** Large Enterprise

**Email Environment:** Microsoft® Exchange

**Type of Solution:** Atlas2Go – A Sales Force Automation and CRM Application Developed In-house

**Business Challenge:** Offer a team of mobile sales reps the ability to check inventory on-the-spot for adidas America retailers and capitalize on the ability to close business when immediate opportunities arise.

**Solution:** adidas America built their own sales force and CRM application using the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution™. Key components of the sales process were automated on BlackBerry® devices to allow the team to access up-to-the-minute inventory data stored in the company's database.

**Results:**

- Ability to speed up and increase sales
- Greater customer satisfaction
- Increased productivity for sales teams
- Potential for expanding wireless business solutions

## The Challenge: Maximize Customer Satisfaction and Purchasing

Making the most of sales calls to valued customers has always been a priority for adidas America. But the ability to check inventory while sitting with a motivated customer has always been a challenge.

Sales reps often used their cell phones to call one of the company's 65 customer service representatives (CSRs) and ask them to check the warehouse for available inventory. These calls interrupted the productivity of the CSRs and left the customers waiting, and listening in, for an answer.

adidas America then offered Web access to the company's Atlas2Go inventory tracking system. But sales reps weren't enthusiastic about carrying laptops and often chose to wait and follow up on product availability after they left the customer meeting. If a product wasn't available, they would have to call back and disappoint a customer.

"Part of the problem is that inventory is always changing," says Tim Oligmueller, Sales Force Automation Manager. "Our goal was to offer a means of giving customers accurate information on-the-spot to increase our "at-once" business. We also wanted to give sales reps a way to check individual order status and reduce the amount of calls to our CSRs."

Since adidas America was already using the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution for email, they began looking at ways to do more with the devices. After a visit to the Wireless Enterprise Symposium, an annual wireless conference sponsored by BlackBerry, Oligmueller found his inspiration.

## Why BlackBerry?

BlackBerry devices were already used for email by sales people and executives across the company. adidas America had briefly experimented with PalmPilot, but rejected it as a viable business option because of the need to synchronize data.

"I didn't like other solutions because they weren't real-time enough for us," Oligmueller explains. "In today's world, I feel that our customers want to see that we're immediately responsive. The other approaches already seemed outdated to me."

The availability of push-based email was a primary factor in choosing BlackBerry. Sales reps did not have to worry about remembering to request email, since data was pushed directly to their devices from the BlackBerry Enterprise Server™. At the end of each day, no one had to remember to synch devices with computers since email, calendars and contacts are done over-the-air.

"I also liked the security of BlackBerry," says Oligmueller. "It made me feel a lot more confident, especially since we were planning to transmit customer data. I really wanted to feel good that we had a wireless solution that was secure."

Oligmueller was also convinced to move forward with BlackBerry because the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution is a robust platform that allows enterprises to securely deploy applications on the devices. When he discovered a relatively simple way to wireless automate the sales process, he knew they were using the right solution.

*"Our customers are totally impressed. They love that our sales reps can pull out their BlackBerry devices and, while sitting right in front of them, can pull up the data without having to make a phone call or follow up later."*

**~TIM OLIGMUELLER,** *Sales Force Automation Manager*

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::: BlackBerry.

## Custom Application Development: Quick and Painless

Oligmueller decided to use the company's own in-house resources to develop the sales force and CRM application. They had already developed Web access to Atlas2Go on the sales people's laptops. Atlas2Go is an order entry and tracking system that formats information into a SQL database and pushes it into an SAP® system.

With that middleware in place, the lion's share of the work was done. What Oligmueller needed was a way to mobilize Atlas2Go for wireless devices. At the Wireless Enterprise Symposium, he discovered that he could download the developer tools right from the BlackBerry web site at www.blackberry.com. His own in-house developer then used those resources to create the wireless application.

With in-house expertise, they developed their own custom Java™ application by leveraging the BlackBerry Mobile Data System™ (BlackBerry MDS™) feature of the BlackBerry Enterprise Server. BlackBerry MDS allows wireless applications to securely connect to back end databases.

"It was amazing how fast it was to develop," says Oligmueller. "I'd say it took us two weeks to get up and running and probably cost us less than $10,000. While it's true that much of that speed and cost effectiveness happened because we had the Atlas2Go application already developed, it was still impressive how easy it was."

One consideration they had with transmitting their data through a wireless device was user-friendliness. "I was very picky with the wireless interface," says Oligmueller. "I wanted it very simple to use with the minimum amount of clicks. There are just a few choices on every screen to make the best use of the real estate and make it easy on the sales person."

*"I wanted our wireless solution to be an extension of what we already had. I was amazed how fast and easy it was to do this using the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution."*

**~TIM OLIGMUELLER,** *Sales Force Automation Manager*

::: BlackBerry

# Checking Inventory On-the-fly

The Atlas2Go application for BlackBerry devices allows inventory queries into the company's SAP application. While sitting with a customer, sales reps can view current inventory levels by style number. They can then choose to receive an email with inventory status, which can be forwarded to the customer. At the bottom of the email, there are embedded links to product images so customers can see pictures of what they just ordered.

"For the sales reps, this changes their lives dramatically," says Oligmueller. "They are not on the phone as much and they're able to have data at their fingertips. They arrive at customer meetings more prepared because they are looking at the most current information immediately before they go to the meeting. And they are also not carrying their laptops when they travel because their BlackBerry devices offer them everything they need."

Sales reps can also check the status of a customer's pending orders. Customers place orders for numerous adidas America products that are going to different stores around the country. Sales reps can now see and manage their open order profile. When a customer asks, reps can show them the exact percentage of the order that has been filled.

"The CSRs are happier now because they are getting less calls," says Oligmueller. "We've seen that an average sales rep is sending 345 queries via their BlackBerry device, thereby saving time on phone calls that would have been made back to the office. Plus, many of our reps now do more queries just so they stay more on top of how they are serving the customers."

Sales reps are also able to create customized catalogues using Atlas2Go on the BlackBerry devices. "We were trying to figure out a way to give every customer a catalogue of the products they just bought," says Oligmueller. "All that the sales rep has to do now is click on the order the customer just placed, using the BlackBerry device, and forward it to a third party vendor we use. Our vendor formats a catalogue in PDF format and sends a link back to the sales rep's BlackBerry device so it can be forwarded to the customer."

Atlas2Go for BlackBerry devices has improved the productivity of sales reps and CSRs, but it is ultimately adidas America customers that are benefiting most. "Our customers love it because they are getting immediate attention. By receiving an email on-the-spot about an order, they are put in a buying frame of mind, which increases our "at once" sales."



Sample Screen Shots from the adidas America Atlas2Go application.

**::: BlackBerry**

## What's Next?

Oligmueller says that he's learned something through this process. "Once you implement a project like this, there are going to be requests for the ability to do more. Most of our sales reps are keenly interested in finding a way to substitute their laptops with their BlackBerry devices."

To help realize this goal and others, the next phase of Atlas2Go will involve the ability to remotely place and change orders. Sales reps will be able to key in the customer's order while they wait, which will no doubt accelerate the closing cycle for sales.

adidas America has also been a touchstone for other worldwide divisions of the company. "I think any information you can wirelessly extend to remote employees, especially in our global supply chain, will be an advantage."

"Yes, we had a middleware product in place," says Oligmueller, "and that simplified a lot. But I would encourage any company to pick a small project and just do a test with the BlackBerry solution. If you already have a developer, you don't have to be super experienced in Java to just pull information from databases."

**For more information on solutions for BlackBerry, visit www.blackberry.com/go/success**

## Results

**Ability to Increase "At Once" Sales:** The Atlas2Go application for BlackBerry devices helps sales reps supply current information to customers which encourages them to make quicker purchasing decisions.

**Increased Productivity for Sales Teams:** Sales reps and CSRs spend less time on the phone with each other checking inventory. Laptops are used less, so people travel lighter. Sales reps are using Atlas2Go to perform more frequent account queries, which better prepares them for meetings and keeps them on top of customer accounts.

**Greater Customer Satisfaction:** Customers are impressed with the immediate service aspect of the BlackBerry solution. They receive current information about potential and current orders, which increases their confidence in doing business with adidas America. The ability to receive PDF catalogues of their order, soon after they placed it, is a competitive differentiator between adidas America and other companies.

**Potential for expanding wireless business solutions:** Using the BlackBerry Enterprise Solution, adidas America plans to enable order placement from the field. Because of the flexibility of the platform and ease of deployment, they are now considering how similar solutions can benefit their global operations.

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**::: BlackBerry.**