

## Case Study



### Next-Gen Loyalty & Procurement System Helps ABS Ramp up Customer Satisfaction

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Infosys and IBM partner to give ABS the competitive edge

#### Abstract

Argos Business Solutions (ABS), the business division of the GBP 5.9 billion Home Retail Group, helps businesses grow customer loyalty and improve employee morale through rewards programmes. Home Retail Group, a market leader in several categories such as toys, domestic appliances, and furniture, comprises two retail divisions – Argos and Homebase. Argos leverages its twice-yearly popular catalogue to serve 130 million customers through its 700 stores, online and on the phone with a range of 18,000 products. Homebase's 300+ out-of-town stores and Internet portal cater for 70 million customer visits providing over 30,000 products.

Although it was in pole position on the highly competitive rewards and loyalty track, ABS realised its feature-rich online loyalty and procurement system needed to be enhanced to ensure its continued market leading position. It needed a scalable and flexible customer loyalty and procurement system that would provide it with the agility required for business advantage.

IBM's WebSphere Commerce Enterprise Version 6.0 was the platform that addressed ABS' business needs for its next-generation system.

ABS partnered with Infosys to roll out a secure, robust and scalable system with a user-friendly interface built on WebSphere Commerce. The new system offers business customers flexibility in customisation of rewards programmes, and end users easier and quicker access to rewards coupled with a satisfying online experience.

## Making Loyalty a Rewarding Experience

Argos Business Solutions (ABS) is a market leader in the UK's corporate loyalty and rewards segment with over 25 years in the business of helping organisations reward loyal customers and employees. A subsidiary of Home Retail Group, which serves 70 million customers through its 300+ Homebase retail outlets and 130 million through its catalogue division Argos, ABS was ahead of the pack in customer loyalty and corporate procurement programmes.

While ABS' existing system was packed with features, the company needed a system that could scale up rapidly to take on board new and larger customers. Competitive pressures called for greater flexibility to speed up the launch of new reward schemes. Further, there was need for richer, and more secure e-commerce capabilities.

### 'Rewardbox' puts ABS ahead of the curve

ABS found the answer in the robust, scalable, flexible, and secure IBM WebSphere Commerce Enterprise Version 6.0 that offered the ideal platform for its new customer loyalty and procurement platform. "The IBM platform helped accelerate and simplify deployment of new features and functionalities, allowing unprecedented flexibility with new rewards schemes," says ABS Managing Director, Neil Fuller.

Relying on Infosys' strengths in the retail space and its experience with loyalty management solutions, ABS partnered with Infosys to build its next-generation rewards and procurement solution – the 'Rewardbox'.

ABS is renowned for its uncompromising adherence to compliance policies such as PCIDSS. Rewardbox added to this strength, ease of usage and improved user interface, making the system more appealing to end users. The addition of strong multi-channel commerce best practices by Infosys with its expertise in WebSphere Commerce technology makes ABS' new system a key differentiator in the market place.

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Neil Fuller  
ABS Managing Director

Says Jon Dixon, ABS General Manager – Rewards, "Infosys' process-driven approach provided us complete clarity and transparency at each step of the programme. Their understanding of the retail sector, especially the loyalty management space, brought valuable experience and knowledge to the development process. This experience has allowed rapid integration with Home Retail Group core systems and has ensured quick results. They worked closely with IBM to ensure effective utilisation of all the functionalities provided by the WebSphere Commerce platform."

Rewardbox, with its robust back-end infrastructure, is secure, scalable and flexible in terms of customisation and new programmes. Programmes can be added as quickly as 2 days – down from 4 weeks earlier. Further, the scalability of the new system ensures that ABS can take on large additional member bases (15x from the existing member base) with ease. The flexibility of the WebSphere Commerce platform also ensures seamless integration with ABS' Order Management, Payment Gateway, E-Catalogue Feed, and Mobile interfaces.

In addition to the rich features and functionalities provided by WebSphere Commerce, Infosys developed the loyalty module that was integrated within the system's e-commerce framework. The future-ready module has ensured that any upgrades to the solution going forward will not entail redevelopment of loyalty capabilities.

Beyond the standard features provided, ABS' Rewardbox allows multi-channel capabilities such as buy-online pick-up in-store, which can also be integrated with call centres, thus offering more choices to end users. Additionally, the Rewardbox offers real-time access to the 18,000-product Argos E-Catalogue, assuring users of the best prices and deals on all products and services available.

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Jon Dixon

*ABS General Manager –Rewards*

The deployment of the new system has reinforced the trust of ABS' customers, while enhancing end user satisfaction significantly. Based on sound technology features and ease of utilisation of the new system, ABS is targeting a 25% increase in like-for-like redemption rates across users. With Rewardbox as a key differentiator in the customer loyalty and corporate procurement marketplace, ABS is bullish on the growth of this line of business.



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#### About Infosys

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