CASE STUDY

Hästens

Neo4j Enables Manufacturer Hästens to Create 360-Degree View of Customers and Drive Ecommerce Worldwide

INDUSTRY
Manufacturing

USE CASES
Master Data Management/
Graph-Based Search &
Recommendations

GOAL
Create a 360-degree view of
every customer for robust
ecommerce

CHALLENGE
Integrate and then utilize data
held in separate silos

SOLUTION
Neo4j collects, connects and
makes instantly available
customer and operational data
globally

RESULTS
– Introduction of global
  e-commerce
– Dramatically improved service
  response times

Swedish beds manufacturer Hästens is using Neo4j to integrate and understand its customer data across a complex web of global operations, enabling Hästens to rapidly launch new ecommerce initiatives and optimize its marketing and customer services

The Company

Founded in Köping, Sweden in 1852, Hästens is one of the oldest bed manufacturers in the world. It specializes in making hand-crafted beds and mattresses using natural materials such as flax, horsehair, cotton and Swedish pine. The company has remained family-owned through six generations, and is an official Purveyor to the Swedish Royal Court. Hästens is an iconic global brand: its products are sold in around 275 outlets across 40 countries, including world-famous department stores such as Macy's and Harrods. Hästens has more than 200 employees and produces some 12,000 beds a year.

The Challenge

Hästens' decades-old culture of craftsmanship and 'no shortcuts' has carried over into its modern e-commerce operation. In 2015 Hästens decided to integrate its IT systems worldwide and drive up sales, based on achieving a full 360-degree view of all its data, operations, customers and partners.

Kent Lovestjärna, Hästens Digital Media Manager, explained: "We have a well-defined goal: to drive traffic to our stores everywhere, and to do that we needed technology that could evolve and scale quickly."

To manage this global project, Hästens called in Swedish-based e-commerce specialist, NetConsult.

Anders Ekström, CEO of NetConsult, said: "Hästens' goal is to provide e-commerce to the whole world. Our main target was to provide them with a 360-degree view of every customer."

This required the integration of data from Hästens' complex global organizational structure, which comprises 275 points of sale – including both Hästens and partner-run run stores – which offer customers over 200,000 different combinations of bed components and colors.

Hästens was also using separate IT systems, including SAP for production planning and material handling, Salesforce for sales & marketing, and other standalone silos of information. As Anders said: "Our job was to model this data structure and suck it all up – to integrate everything."

The Solution

NetConsult chose to collect all Hästens' critical data in a single core database, based on a 'master data management' approach. This mass of inter-connected data – Anders calls it 'relationship-intense' information – required a special type of data store. The solution was Neo4j, a graph database designed specifically to capture complex relationships between different data items.

Installed at the end of 2015, Neo4j now allows Hästens users to retrieve and query customer information drawn from multiple data sources in near real time.

Anders explained the choice of Neo4j over a traditional database: "It comes down to how the data is structured in Neo4j, which enables us to quickly build queries and retrieve data. We couldn't do that with a conventional SQL database, it wouldn't scale up. Using Neo4j we can deliver code and

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Digital Media Manager, Hästens

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CEO, NetConsult

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Hästens' first and crucial step was to use Neo4j to automate and optimize the management of requests for its product catalogue, dramatically cutting the timelag between order and delivery.

Kent said: "The catalogue is the most important thing we have. We know the people ordering it are the most likely to come into stores and buy our products – they provide a high ROI. But depending on where the customer is, and how many partners are between them and Hästens, it could take four weeks from ordering a catalogue to delivery. We have lowered that to 2-3 days worldwide."

He added: "The catalogue is now a tool for Hästens managers to see how well stores are following up the leads, to call customers, book meetings and so on. From these reports we are getting information on who's performing best – and we haven't been able to do that before."

Hästens and individual stores are also using the new knowledge to optimize their marketing, carrying out much more narrow-filtered campaigns targeted at where actual sales are.

Kent said: "We can now see where in the world we sold the beds and in what kind of store, by collecting data from SAP, Salesforce and third-party software. So instead of the marketing team pushing everything to a particular country, we can target specific areas. Before we couldn't measure anything. Now we have Neo4j collecting everything, giving us full omni-channel marketing. That is the most important thing for us."

Kent added Neo4j is enabling Hästens to launch e-commerce and marketing initiatives almost on demand. "There are a lot of people requesting new data or applications and a few days later they have them. It's no problem with Neo4j, we can just set it up."

The Results

Among the innovations, Hästens has developed a Neo4j-based pricing engine which integrates all its bed and component prices across dozens of different currencies and languages. This can lock prices for products, or set specific prices for countries or customers it wants to target. "Neo4j is taking care of all that for us," Kent said.

Using Neo4j, customers can also specify the exact bed they want via the 'bed configurator' tool. This is integrated with SAP to automate production orders, previously a manual process.

Two even bigger projects are underway. Hästens is enabling every partner store worldwide to run their own website, yet fully integrated with Hästens' site under Neo4j. Stores can promote their own local services, while Hästens provides them with standard web modules, to manage its brand image and ensure up-to-date online data.

Hästens is also building a business-critical e-commerce webstore that will integrate online sales across its store and partner network. Stores will be able to present customers with pages tailored to their tastes and products they have already bought, using Neo4j's ability to rapidly retrieve this connected data. Kent said: "That's going to be most important for us because we know Neo4j can do that. When the consumer logs in, we will know what bed they have, and then show them exactly the kind of products they need."

Kent concluded: "We're integrating Neo4j into the company to find solutions to challenges that we've been working on for years. We are really happy with Neo4j. What we are achieving with this single product is massive because we have no restrictions. We can do what we want to, and it's been really easy to integrate. It just works. The sky's the limit with Neo4j."

Neo4j is the leader in graph database technology. As the world's most widely deployed graph database, we help global brands – including Comcast, NASA, UBS, and Volvo Cars – to reveal and predict how people, processes and systems are interrelated.

Using this relationships-first approach, applications built with Neo4j tackle connected data challenges such as analytics and artificial intelligence, fraud detection, real-time recommendations, and knowledge graphs. Find out more at neo4j.com.

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