

## IBM and MarCole use 21st century technology to speed sales of products handmade in 19th century farmhouse



### Overview

#### The Challenge

*Set up a state-of-the-art, Web-based gift registry system for a retailer with limited IT resources*

#### The Solution

*MarCole Independent Retailer Edition of Gift RegistryWorks backed by IBM e-business Hosting™ Services as part of IBM Software as Services™*

#### The Result

*Significant increase in gift registry sales with online system replacing paper-based procedures*

For more than 20 years, MacKenzie-Childs has enjoyed an increasing business of creating handmade enamelware, ceramics, glassware, furniture and home accessories sold through its own retail stores and catalogue and at selected upscale retailers around the United States. The company prides itself on producing unique, high-quality offerings that are matched by the same high level of customer service.

“Our products make ideal engagement and wedding gifts,” explained Sandra Cirel DeLaus, director of information technology at MacKenzie-Childs. “But until last year, our gift registry was a completely manual operation. It wasn’t easy for customers or for us to use.

“A bride would register in one store and, in effect, that was the only place where friends or

relatives could buy from the list. If someone was in another store selling MacKenzie-Childs products and wanted to see the list, the second store would have to telephone the originating store and ask for the information to be faxed. It wasn’t an efficient way to do business.”

#### Customers want online gift registry

DeLaus recalled that MacKenzie-Childs on its own had developed a successful online sales catalogue, and customers were asking for similar access to a gift registry. She said, “We were eager to get one up and running. But we simply didn’t have enough IT in-house support to do it.

*“We were looking for features and functionality . . . We were looking for something that was much less expensive than we could do ourselves . . . That’s what MarCole and IBM delivered.”*

Sandra Cirel DeLaus, director of information technology, MacKenzie-Childs

That's when MacKenzie-Childs turned to a Software as Services solution from IBM and MarCole Interactive Systems, an IBM Business Partner. It chose the Independent Retailer Edition of Gift RegistryWorks from MarCole, backed by IBM e-business Hosting Services.

"We were looking for features and functionality," DeLaus said, "and — no surprise — we were looking for something that was much less expensive than we could do ourselves. That's what MarCole and IBM delivered."

IBM Software as Services brings MacKenzie-Childs lower IT costs that are aligned with usage, minimal upfront expense, rapid implementation and reduced risk. MarCole Independent Retailer Edition of Gift RegistryWorks enables smaller retailers to set up a gift registry without investing in custom software or special hardware. All that's needed is a personal computer with a Web browser and an Internet connection.

### **Online gift registry sales growing every month**

DeLaus said she can't reveal the dollar volumes generated by the registry because that's proprietary information. "But," she added, "I can say that every month the numbers are growing significantly. It's opened up a whole new sales avenue for us."

MacKenzie-Childs headquarters is on a 75-acre former dairy farm in the upstate New York town of Aurora, overlooking one of the Finger Lakes. When MacKenzie-Childs acquired the farm, the company turned the dairy barn into a working studio for the artisans who create its products.

MarCole has been an IBM Business Partner since it began business 15

years ago, said David Pava, vice president of sales at MarCole. "But Software as Services is new to us. In fact, MacKenzie-Childs is one of our first clients to use this means of delivering industrial-strength IT at low cost."

He said IBM "gives us credibility" when talking with potential clients. He added, "They have great confidence that we can meet their needs when we tell them we're working with IBM."

MarCole Interactive Systems specializes in delivering leading-edge, multi-channel gift registry solutions. The privately held company is based in Walnut Creek, California.

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David Pava,  
vice president of sales,  
MarCole Interactive Systems

### **Learn more**

To learn more about MarCole Interactive Systems, visit [marcole.com](http://marcole.com)

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