

# Extranet Collaboration Manager for SharePoint 2007 Case Study



## Client Overview

La-Z-Boy Incorporated is one of the world's leading residential furniture producers, marketing furniture for every room of the home. La-Z-Boy sells through more than 70 company-owned stores, nearly 250 independent La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries and approximately 300 in-store galleries at furniture dealers, department stores and other outlets. The company has nearly 12,000 employees.

## Problem

La-Z-Boy has numerous business partners, vendors and licensees, and sharing information with organizations outside the company had become a major issue. Because SharePoint out-of-the-box only allows administrators to create user accounts and assign security roles, the IT department was faced with making business decisions about what information to make accessible to outside parties in critical areas such as intellectual property.

"From our IT department's perspective, it's been a difficult job to shift through line-of-business content and make decisions about what it

proprietary," said Shawn Snowdy, Senior Systems Engineer for La-Z-Boy. Yet, precious IT time and resources were being spent on just that. If anything was questionable, IT would leave the documents out and error on side of caution, but the downside was that sometimes partners and others wouldn't have access to important information for which they had a legitimate need.



## Solution

Through an Internet search to try to find a solution to this problem, Snowdy discovered Extranet Collaboration Manager for SharePoint 2007 (ExCM), which improves collaboration by providing user management functions to individuals who are intimate with shared content and salient business objectives. The end result is partners, customers and suppliers gaining timely access to important information while still maintaining security, audit ability and accountability.

ExCM works with forms based authentication (FBA) to allow user management and user self-service

functions for non-Active Directory users. The combination of FBA and ExCM enables companies to securely share information with third parties without giving them direct access to a company's network, and without giving away true SharePoint administrative privileges. Individual departments or divisions can manage the account creation process with external parties, enabling them to delegate user maintenance and management tasks to business partners or internal line-of-business users while still providing the capability to monitor and audit their activities within their collaborative environments.

### **Implementation**

Getting non-IT people to use ExCM was "a very easy transition," Snowdy says, "because business departments used SharePoint internally, it was a natural progression to use SharePoint and ExCM externally." La-Z-Boy experienced only minor integration issues, and SharePoint Solutions' professional staff was "prompt and very concise in problem resolution," he notes.

### **Result**

ExCM enabled La-Z-Boy to shift the burden from IT to line-of-business employees with expertise in specific areas who know what is appropriate to share with external parties, and let them manage the account-creation process. Moreover, the user's overall experience is improved through self-service features like the ability to reset their own passwords.

For example, if working with a construction company, La-Z-Boy's Construction Department can set up a site for subs, and set up an account for each of them. An internal administrator in the Construction Department determines what materials and information subs see and have access to. The result is greater efficiency, resulting in cost-savings and more strategic use of IT resources.



"ExCM puts the power into the business and gets it out of IT," Snowdy says. As a result, "IT doesn't become the document police."

"Everyone likes it," Snowdy concludes. "The response is, 'Wow, we can do that!'"



Nashville, Tenn.-based SharePoint Solutions is a national leader in Microsoft SharePoint training, consulting and add-on software. For more information, visit <http://software.sharepointsolutions.com> or call Tony Bierman at 615.944-1544.