

***ProLifics***<sup>®</sup>

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# Warehouse Company Succeeds Through Modernization

Software upgrade drives company revenue and satisfies customer demand

CLIENT | CHALLENGE | ACTION | RESULTS | TECHNOLOGY



# Our Client

Our client is a leading warehouse club (WC) operator in the United States. They provide perishable food products, including daily fresh fruit and produce; general merchandise; gas; and other services – all at low prices. WC has been a Prolifics client for over five years.

# Challenge

## Retail in general

Retail is changing – fast – due to the demands of tech-savvy customers who expect the “omnichannel experience” – a high level, seamless interaction whether they’re shopping online, in-store, through mobile or calling in. Any disconnect in the flow can make for a disappointing experience, leading to less loyal customers and consequently lower revenue. To meet these higher customer expectations, retailers needed more data for more information and analysis so they could react to their customers’ needs. Older, on-premise legacy systems that silo data are not up to this task. Integration/modernization is the key first step toward providing the omnichannel experience.





“We’ve been selling Cloud Pak for Integration to our client for the past two years and stood it out at the foundational level, giving them the capacity and flow to get things done.”

— **Steven Aiello, Regional Sales Executive for Prolifics**

## Challenge (cont.)

### WC’s COVID-19 environment and beyond

WC was in the process of a digital transformation to enhance its digital capabilities and offerings. COVID-19 elevated the importance of the digital transformation, and the ability to pivot and change became more urgent for WC, even as the pandemic subsided. In recent years, the company launched an improved website; mobile app; digital coupons; buy online, pick-up in store; same-day grocery delivery; expanded digital options to include fresh and frozen grocery items, and other e-commerce conveniences for members. According to the company, new members are joining at a record pace, and the company is targeting new members who are younger and more digitally engaged. Consequently, WC needs to continually ensure its technology manages these applications and orders to maintain a strong omnichannel offering.



“We turned up the throttle on the technology to give it the capabilities to do everything our client wanted it to do this year.”

— **Steven Aiello, Regional Sales Executive for Prolifics**

## Action

For more than five years now, Prolifics has helped WC to modernize and expand their IT capabilities by coupling IBM solutions with Prolifics’ services and solutions. This includes working with IBM Integration Bus (IIB), IBM MQ (messaging and queuing) and MQ Appliance, QRadar, Cognos Business Intelligence and multiple DataPower components.

Prolifics continues to lead the major digital transformation at WC. Because of the increase in its digital segment, the company had to acquire more digital infrastructure while ensuring flexibility for further growth:

- The WC executive leadership team requested that Prolifics partner with WC’s information technology Order Management System (OMS) Commerce team to implement the most recent IBM Sterling Order Management. The order management system expansion gives the company the ability to process more orders per second.
- Prolifics successfully proposed utilizing IBM Cloud Pak for Integration (CP4I). Cloud Pak components let WC receive the higher number of orders per second for OMS processing.

## Action (cont.)

The Sterling large store unlimited deal extended WC's bandwidth within their procurement architecture for the Sterling product in their OMS. For instance, WC purchased a refrigeration company that the Sterling OMS manages in terms of how products will be picked up and delivered. "WC is currently making strategic acquisitions that tie into CP4I," said Steven Aiello, Regional Sales Executive for Prolifics. "Having the OMS as an unlimited software license was huge, considering what WC's potential growth was going to be from acquiring a refrigeration company that depends on the OMS."

In 2019, Prolifics presented WC with a modernization roadmap. This roadmap illustrated their current technology architecture, infrastructure and integration level, as well as where IBM was headed in terms of their technology and what WC would need to do to get there, including licensing software for CP4I.

"I immediately started working with an IBM representative to create this modernization roadmap," said Aiello. "It was based on WC's current technology portfolio on how we could take the old MQ product (which falls into CP4I), consolidate all of their sites into a larger deal, and possibly trade that old software in for new software that would fall into the modernization roadmap (which would be CP4I). We actually set up CP4I for WC when COVID hit."

While very few organizations have the expertise to implement Red Hat OpenShift within their

current infrastructure and integration level, we were able to sell WC the software and stand up the CP4I environment for them.

There were certain tasks that needed to wait for a 2021 upgrade. Sushil Tripathi, Integration Software Architect with Prolifics, said, "We needed to configure different versions of DataPower, so we had to pause the CP4I implementation and work with IBM's development team to have that feature incorporated and implement the solution with them."

In 2022, we conducted a proof-of-concept (POC) to determine whether CP4I could successfully auto scale and run native APIs. Tripathi said, "WC had thousands of APIs that were exposed externally, and changing the domains or URLs was a big challenge, since they would need to test it and then socialize with the different customers. This meant that all of the URLs that were associated with their on-prem URL had to be migrated to AWS without using proxy."

Aiello said, "Together, Prolifics and WC accomplished something that not a lot of organizations could. We've been working with this new technology for the past two years, giving WC the capacity and flow to get things done. We really turned up the throttle to give it the capabilities to do everything they wanted it to do this year, and that's testament to our partnership."

# Results

The OMS expansion and Cloud Pak licensing give WC the ability to receive and process more orders per second, helping to drive revenue and meet customer demand.

## CP4I gives the company:

- licensing flexibility for different solutions
- an anchor for WC's future cloud expansion
- help with secure file transmissions and improved DevOps tools and processes

We are also using the latest container technology with CP4I. Tripathi said, "The system is intelligent enough that it can spin up a new machine, deploy and host. This makes it a very cutting-edge technology. They can move from one place to another easily. If they want to do it on-prem, they can, or even make a few changes and start it on the new cloud."

For WC, Cloud Pak is about positioning themselves later for even more growth. The licensing flexibility allows them to grow and expand easily in a cost-efficient manner. WC's growth has allowed it to make investments as an organization, and by leveraging the partnership with Prolifics, they've done it with cost efficiency. For instance, by upgrading WC to CP4I, we created greater accessibility for their traditional

and newer members, who were able to make product purchases in a variety of ways. This allowed WC to gain a competitive advantage and keep up with the retail industry's "new normal" after COVID-19.

Aiello said, "A lot of what they did and how we supported it by providing them better software and services came from them pivoting as an organization and offering different ways to consume their products to both new and traditional members. Your traditional WC member was generally older. Over the past couple of years, WC and their digital transformation effort has focused on a younger membership."

WC's digital transformation has helped them pivot in terms of the products they're offering and how they offer them. They've diversified their product offering to include gas, electronics, clothing and apparel.

By acting as coaches, we equipped WC with the foundational knowledge they need for CP4I implementation. We're able to meet WC's needs due to our 40 years of experience, our skill sets and our position as an IBM premier partner and vendor.



“Our integration expertise allows us to ‘connect the dots’ across an IT organization.”

— **Steven Aiello, Regional Sales Executive for Prolifics**

## Technology

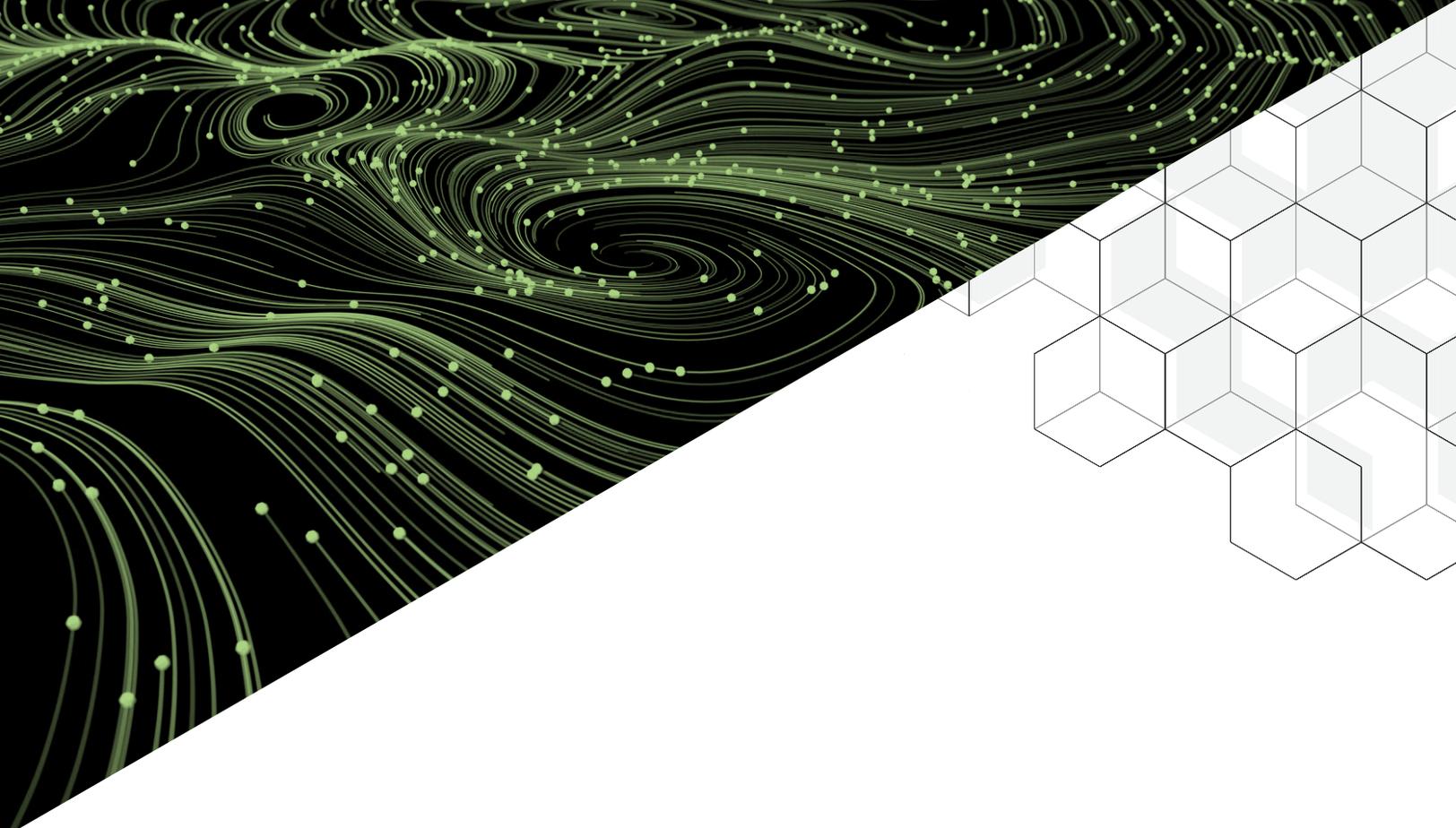
Tripathi explains the inner workings of CP4I and the benefits it provides WC. “IBM’s latest direction for all products is Kubernetes,” he said. “The recent product development is on the Kubernetes side with CP4I in the same direction. All of their integration tools come together on the CP4I platform, which gives complete end-to-end tracing, logging and security on the Kubernetes platform where a different component of IBM’s DataPower MQ is incorporated. Cloud Pak for Data interacts with all of these services and then you can implement detailed security, track all transactions, etc. CP4I is flexible enough to scale up or down automatically with the use of containers. No user intervention is required.”

### IBM Sterling Order Management:

Per IBM: “Meet complex order management challenges and high customer expectations. IBM Sterling Order Management software lets you orchestrate your entire fulfillment network with powerful core capabilities and next-level options... Combine multichannel order aggregation, inventory and delivery visibility, and service availability within a single platform, for truly omnichannel order fulfillment.”

### IBM Cloud Pak for Integration:

Per IBM: “IBM Cloud Pak for Integration gives you complete, flexible integration by using the capabilities you need to move at today’s speed of business, including the tools to help you achieve your application modernization goals as part of your journey to the cloud.”



# About Prolifics

Prolifics is a global digital engineering and consulting firm helping clients navigate and accelerate their digital transformation journeys. We deliver relevant outcomes using our systematic approach to rapid, enterprise-grade continuous innovation. We treat our digital deliverables like a customized product – using agile practices to deliver immediate and ongoing increases in value.

We provide consulting, engineering and managed services for all our practice areas – Data & AI, Integration & Applications, Business Automation, DevXOps, Test Automation, and Cybersecurity across multiple industries – at any point our clients need them. Visit [prolifics.com](https://prolifics.com)

