



## Comergent Readies PRM Update

By Barbara Darrow

**CRN**

**Redwood City, Calif.** - 10:07 AM EST Tues., Feb. 25, 2003

Comergent Technologies next week plans to unveil an updated partner relationship management suite that includes new perks for key vertical industries.

With Comergent 6.3, the company added new price optimization and search and auction capabilities to its C3 lineup of e-business applications, said Tom Mescall, senior vice president of marketing and business development at the Redwood City-based company, which targets the manufacturing sector. The current Comergent 6 release already offers lead management, parts diagram, configuration, order status and order change capabilities across the demand-chain management spectrum.

The new auction capability will let a manufacturer price goods according to order size, applying volume discounts as needed, Mescall said. Comergent 6.3 supports open- or closed-bid auctions, as well as several types of promotional pricing, including free product, product upgrades and special freight offers.

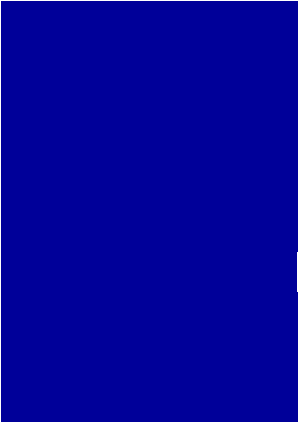
Bob Olwig, vice president of business development at Worldwide Technology, a St. Louis-based solution provider specializing in e-procurement, said he's particularly interested in Comergent 6.3's new search capabilities. "This is more than a Google-type search across all the modules. It will help our customers find the products they're looking for," he said.

The \$900 million company uses Comergent as its de facto front-office application in interactions with customers such as integrator Computer Sciences Corp. (CSC), Olwig said. All of the new features in Comergent 6.3 will give customers like Worldwide Technology the flexibility to adapt to changing markets, he added.

At Comergent, the average sale size is about \$500,000 and "holding steady," Mescall said. The company is strong in the automotive and industrial manufacturing segments, where vendors deal with hundreds--or even thousands--of small equipment suppliers and need the ability to track parts numbers and inventories across firewalls.

PRM, pioneered by companies such as Boston-based Channelwave, is an emerging category that other vendors, such as CRM leader Siebel Systems, are trying to penetrate, according to industry observers. But there are key differences between the CRM and PRM markets, Mescall said.

CRM solutions "are great if you don't know who your customers are" because a properly implemented CRM system will aggregate customer data on past orders and service requests, Mescall said. "But PRM is critical for large companies that know exactly who their customers and partners are," he said, adding that partners range from dealers and franchisees to resellers and suppliers with which a given company must share inventory, order and service



information.

Comergent's software is based on the J2EE framework--a factor that makes it attractive to customers that want to build on standards, observers said.

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