

## Creating the web architecture of the future



### Client

Tesco.com is the online division of Tesco plc and the world's largest online grocery retailer. As well as the UK, Tesco.com operates in the Republic of Ireland and South Korea. The grocery website has over 18 million registered customers.

### Goal

- ◆ Create a flexible, modular website architecture capable of supporting the ongoing development of the online business

### Charteris' Role

- ◆ Analyse business needs and system requirements
- ◆ Articulate and document over 27,000 requirements
- ◆ Provide a bridge between the IT and business teams

### Results

- ◆ A new web architecture that meets the current and future needs of the business and will enable the introduction of new features for customers

**Tesco.com's online grocery business is renowned for offering one of the best retail websites in the world. Indeed, in 2003, Tesco.com's CEO received an award for innovation in online retailing. However, the organisation needed to keep on innovating to ensure the future success of its online grocery business. It appointed Charteris to help it undertake a massive redevelopment of its core website architecture. The project addressed over 27,000 business requirements and considered the future needs of 18 million customers.**

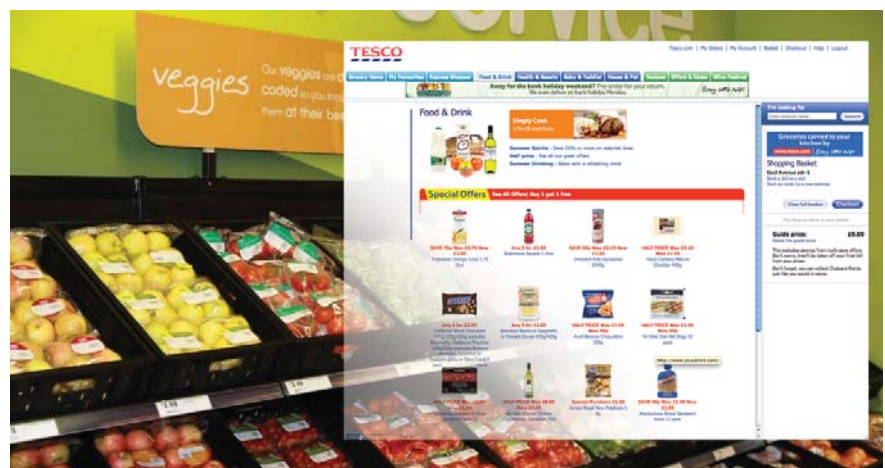
Tesco.com decided to undertake a complete redesign of its grocery website to enable it to continue to offer the best possible online grocery shopping experience for customers. The project was an ambitious one, and there was a lot at stake. If the new website failed, it could put the success of Tesco.com's £1.5 billion online grocery business in jeopardy.

Angela Maurer is a senior marketing manager at Tesco.com with responsibility for the grocery website. She explains the reasons behind the project: "Our grocery website was doing a fantastic job, but to take it further and realise our international capabilities, we needed to make the underlying architecture more modular and flexible," she says. "The website was around ten years old and based on older technologies, and this was restricting what we wanted to do."

As part of the project, Tesco.com aimed to improve personalisation for customers,

improve navigation around the site and introduce a modern, fresh interface to create an environment where customers would want to shop. The primary goal of the project, however, was to create an underlying architecture to support the introduction of new features in the future.

This project was a massive undertaking for Tesco.com, and the online retailer didn't have all of the expertise and experience in house to accomplish it. The organisation therefore decided to appoint two external consultants to support its in-house business analysts and developers. "Our internal employees were highly skilled but didn't have experience of working on a project of this size or complexity," recalls Maurer. "We therefore sought a firm of consultants with experience of large-scale projects and retail systems." The organisation selected Charteris, and two of the firm's consultants joined Tesco.com to play a key role in the development of the new grocery website.



“Charteris really understood what customers wanted and what the business was trying to achieve. The consultants then worked with the IT team to make sure that it understood what was needed of the technical solution.”

**Angela Maurer,**  
Senior marketing manager,  
Tesco.com



### A clear language for complex processes

Charteris provided clarity on complex business areas, by carrying out specific business analysis and preparing structured documentation. One consultant from Charteris took responsibility for internal processes and, in particular, the many complexities surrounding products and pricing. A second Charteris consultant took responsibility for analysing customer processes and changes that would improve the consumer shopping experience.

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To help bridge the gap between the business team and the IT team, Charteris introduced Business Process Modelling. This provided a clear language for articulating complex processes to all parties involved in the project, including an offshore software development group. Maurer explains: “The consultants were very good at understanding what the business wanted to deliver and turning that into a list of IT requirements that the developers could deliver. They could also translate back to us any issues from the IT department.”

In total, Charteris helped to define over 27,000 requirements for the new website architecture. The consultants introduced processes to ensure the tight management of these requirements and ensured that requirements could be fully traced throughout the lifecycle of the project.

### A flexible platform for the future

The consultants got on well with Tesco.com's existing business analysts and worked with them as part of one focused team. “They were brilliant,” says Maurer. “The Charteris consultants worked closely with us. They were always very helpful and positive.”

The prior experience of the Charteris' consultants proved to be very valuable to Tesco.com. “They know how to deal with the complexities of product management and how to set up prices,” said Maurer.

The new website has now been launched and is being rolled out to customers in a series of phases. Eventually, all of Tesco.com's 18 million registered customers will benefit from the new solution. “Feedback from the first customers to use the new website has been good,” says Maurer.

Most importantly, the new website now gives Tesco.com the flexible platform that it needs to continue to expand and develop its online grocery business. “This project has set us up for the future,” Maurer asserts. “We now have a much better architectural design for our website that will allow us to introduce new services and features more easily. It will enable us to do a lot more, a lot faster.”

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**Business specialists who speak IT**  
**IT experts who think business**



#### About Charteris

Charteris delivers greater customer focus and business efficiency through seamless business and IT consulting. Our unique blend of 'business specialists who speak IT and IT experts who think business' ensures that clients receive seamless solutions that deliver competitive edge.

Leading public and private sector organisations draw on our deep experience to help them improve performance and reduce costs. Our services include [Customer Centric Business Change](#), [Microsoft Dynamics](#) solutions and other advanced solutions based on the full spectrum of [Microsoft Technologies](#) and associated technologies.

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