

UPDATE

with traveling sales teams.

Before Farris arrived, back orders piled up for months and accounting had to manually reconcile every order received. "There was no oper-

The new application takes orders, ships inventory and replenishes stock.

ational integrity," he says. So Farris dumped three old enterprise resource planning systems and switched to Oracle. But for a POS system, Farris had to customize. "It's not something we found in any off-the-shelf box, and customization like this is contrary to just about everything I believe in," he says.

But Farris does believe in the company's new Web-based application, which is sophisticated enough to replenish stock and ship inventory directly to customers yet simple enough for mobile salespeople, who use laptops and signature-capturing technology for transactions. With the old POS, updating the price on a single style cost "in excess of \$10,000 due to all the manual work across disparate data sources," Farris says. "Now it costs us pennies." Problem solved.

—ELLEN O'BRIEN



(toolshed)

GETTING IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME

WHAT IF YOU could make end users happy and boost developer productivity at the same time? **Guido Sacchi**, the CIO of \$948-million CompuCredit Corp., a financial services company in Atlanta, did just that. He wanted to show users how an application would look before developers invested programming time. So he tried out so-called **requirements visualization tools**, which let developers simulate the look of an application before writing any code. After evaluating offerings from Axure Software Solutions, iRise and Serena Software, he chose iRise because of its intuitiveness. Sacchi says that after implementing the product in early 2005, average application development time has decreased as much as 35%—nearly a month. "We've eliminated a lot of the rework on the back end because requirements are defined right," he says. —MEGAN SANTOSUS

(your career)

WITI: Career Building and Carb Counting?

One of the missions of **Women in Technology International (WITI)** is transforming "media and corporate perceptions of women" (www.witi.com). To that end, the for-profit professional networking organization's Web site includes the WITI Hall of Fame, which features women like NASA astronaut Bonnie Dunbar. But the site also offers information more reminiscent of iVillage than Careers.com. Consider its carb-counting tips from a popular WITI columnist or its Online Mall, which allows users to browse for the latest travel accessories, among other items. "We did a survey, and 100% of them said they like to see health-[related] content," says **David Leighton**, son of WITI founder and President Carolyn Leighton, in defense of the features. "And this year, we're launching a WITI line of laptop bags." OK, but no WITI stilettos, right? —ELLEN O'BRIEN