NerdBlock Subscription Service

There is a massive industry around what is sometimes called “Nerd Culture”, and it includes a wide array of subcultures including horror, sci-fi, comic books, classic “nerd” culture and arcade. NerdBlock is a Canadian business with which people can subscribe to one or more of these genres and each month will receive a box containing collectable items from it.

They originally launched the company expecting a slow start, optimistically projecting a few hundred to maybe one thousand subscribers in the first three months. As an experimental business NerdBlock did not invest in a robust software solution to manage subscriptions or the acquisition of the collectible items being mailed out. To their surprise, by the third week of their launch they had exceeded 20,000 subscribers and found themselves scrambling to fulfill orders in a timely manner, and the Access database they had originally set up quickly became overloaded as they had to add numerous staff to manage the unexpected influx of customers. The database was not easily accessible by each of these employees, nor was it structured in a way that allowed efficient tracking of all the transactions surrounding the business itself.

NerdBlock is in need a database application that will handle the ordering and tracking of items and their various attributes. The products are rarely ever sent out more than once, and so typically a shipment of 10,000 Batman bobble heads will be the only instance of that purchase for some years. Any overstock is redirected to the brick and mortar stores NerdBlock also owns, known as Joe Nerds, and the system needs to reflect the details of that transfer but is not intended to also serve Joe Nerds as there is already a POS system in place there.

In addition to managing the stocked items, the system must also be useful for managing their customer accounts and the subscription history of each customer whether active or inactive and especially if they subscribe to more than one genre. The system should also be able to produce useful reports from the dataset that will help NerdBlock to make confident business decisions moving forward. Their number of subscribers shows no sign of slowing down, and they are the most widely distributed monthly subscription service worldwide by a large margin. Thus, the proposed system will need to be capable of managing customer relationships beyond the borders of Canada.