



Global content management system consolidates and integrates key financial, customer, and product data

Benefits

- Greater employee productivity through automation of formerly paper-based processes
- Enhanced customer service through quick, easy access to key customer and product information
- More effective sales presentations with fingertip access to images of product packaging configurations
- Seamless employee access to centralized repository of company information
- Reduced costs through electronic storage of critical documents

Business overview

SIG Combibloc is a leading international provider of systems for manufacturing aseptic beverage cartons for long-life food, ranging from juices and milk to soups and sauces. The company supplies complete systems including the packaging material as well as the filling machines.

SIG Combibloc draws on the skills, experience, and inventiveness of more than 4,000 employees worldwide, and a global presence that enables it to respond quickly and effectively to local customer needs. The company has five packaging plants in Germany; one plant each in Austria, Great Britain, Thailand, and China; one under construction in Saudi Arabia, as well as subsidiaries in almost every country.

Challenges

Like any global, rapidly growing enterprise, SIG Combibloc relies on its ability to provide employees with fast, easy access to accurate product and customer data, from anywhere in the organization. The company's supply data chain is based on SAP®, which provides the informational backbone for production planning, purchasing, production, distribution, and sales functions.

Until recently however, SIG Combibloc was still relying on manual and paper-based methods for processing certain kinds of financial and customer information, resulting in inefficiencies and reduced productivity. In one example, SIG's paper-based system for invoice verification and updating had become unwieldy and inefficient in the face of rapid growth and a continued expansion of the company's customer base. SIG needed a more effective method for handling an ever-growing volume of invoices, without having to hire additional staff.

"We needed an enterprise solution to automate the document-based processes in our knowledge chain and seamlessly integrate them with the information in our data supply chain, held by SAP," said Karsten Lenzen, ECM project manager for the SIG Group. "We also needed to give our personnel transparent access to the information they need to do their jobs, without having to worry about where the information comes from."



EMC solution

SIG Combibloc's solution is an enterprise-wide content management system based on a suite of products from EMC. The EMC® Documentum® content management platform provides the repository for all business-critical documents. EMC Documentum Content Services for SAP provides the integration between Documentum and SIG's SAP R/3® implementation, and EMC Documentum Archive Services for SAP provides scalable, secure archiving services. EMC Captiva® InputAccel® software automates the scanning of hard copy documents, and long-term archiving is handled with an EMC Centera® content addressable storage device.

Business profile

SIG Combibloc

World-leading provider of systems for aseptic beverage cartons for long-life food such as juices, milk, soups, and sauces.

Industry

Discrete manufacturing

Geographies

Worldwide presence with plants in Linnich and Wittenberg, Germany; Saalfelden, Austria; Rayong, Thailand; Suzhou, China; and Houghton-Le-Spring, Great Britain

Business solution

AP/AR processing and invoicing, enterprise content management, digital asset management, transactional content management

EMC products

EMC Documentum content management platform, EMC Content Services for SAP, EMC Archive Services for SAP, EMC Captiva InputAccel scanning software, EMC Centera content addressable storage device

Deployment summary

Enterprise-wide content repository integrated with SAP to store, access, and manage invoices, customer data, and product data and images

Seamless invoice processing with Purchase to Pay

The centerpiece of the new system is the SIG Purchase to Pay (P2P) project, which replaces previous manual systems for invoice processing, such as copying of paper invoices and routing them via interoffice mail, with a rules-based electronic process. Paper invoices are scanned into the system and indexed by the InputAccel software and then imported to the Documentum repository.

Once an hour, a server-based workflow triggers rules in SAP to automatically route the invoice to the appropriate accounts payable auditor. Once the AP auditor approves the invoice, another rule is triggered to automatically archive the invoice in the Centera system.

A key element of the P2P system is the process status monitor (PSM), which functions as an invoice log and allows AP managers to control the processing and validation status of all invoices at any time, during and after the process. The PSM selection screen provides the ability to refine the search results of the invoices based on specific criteria such as invoice type, date, or document number. The resulting list displays all invoices matching the specific search criteria, with each row representing an invoice. Each invoice also has a unique process number. If a user clicks in any field of a chosen invoice row, he or she is transferred to the associated SAP standard. From the result list, the screen links to the current user or the user history.

With P2P, SIG has been able to manage an ever-increasing number of incoming invoices without having to increase staff, resulting in significant savings. Because more than 800,000 invoice pages are now stored and managed electronically, SIG has also been able to reduce its physical storage costs. "With the savings we've gained, both in personnel and storage costs, we've already recovered our initial investment in the EMC technology," said Lenzen.

Customer service made quick and easy

With a globally distributed customer base, SIG is by necessity a service-driven company requiring the ability to access product and customer information quickly and easily. The EMC Documentum-based system has greatly enhanced the jobs of customer service personnel by providing a centralized repository for product documentation and other information from multiple departments including marketing, construction, and engineering. The information is extracted from SAP using Content Services for SAP, and is replicated nightly to the Documentum repository. Users access the easy-to-use Documentum Webtop interface to search for and access documents based on key attributes and document type. "We wanted make the information accessible to our users without them having to worry about the underlying file structure," said Lenzen.

Putting products on display

Another key EMC implementation is the SIG product eBook, a system for digital asset management that stores digital images of all product configurations either in production or completed for customers. The eBook has great value in the customer service realm, by enabling customer service representatives to answer customer inquiries and show initial product designs. The eBook also supports sales and marketing by giving sales representatives quick, easy access to product images for presentations to be given to prospective customers. Again, specific attributes of the packaging and customer specifications are automatically extracted from SAP, and linked to the corresponding image of the package as stored in the Documentum repository.

A single intranet for all employee information

SIG Combibloc is also using the EMC-based system to power a new, enterprise-wide intranet. With SIGnet, employees now have a single portal with which to access company news, human resources documents, and a wealth of other company information and resources. The integration of the Documentum repository with SAP enables the system to seamlessly present customer and product information in an easy-to-use web front-end. “Previously, each department had its own intranet solution and there was no common structure across the company,” said Lenzen. “With SIGnet, our employees are more productive because they spend less time searching for information, and we can control the accuracy and timeliness of the information by managing it in a centralized repository.”

“By giving our employees seamless access to the information they need to do their jobs, the EMC-based system has helped our company run more productively and effectively. For instance, the online processing of accounts payable has assisted with the reorganization and centralization of operational procedures of all SIG subsidiaries.”

Karsten Lenzen, ECM Project Manager

Summary

With its enterprise content management solution powered by EMC products, SIG Combibloc has been able to consolidate key corporate information and more effectively leverage customer and product data held in SAP. As a result, the company has been able to streamline and build new efficiencies into such critical processes as invoice processing, customer service, and sales and marketing. “By giving our employees seamless access to the information they need to do their jobs, the EMC-based system has helped our company run more productively and effectively,” said Lenzen. “For instance, the online processing of accounts payable has assisted with the reorganization and centralization of operational procedures of all SIG subsidiaries.”

About EMC

EMC Corporation (NYSE: EMC) is the world's leading developer and provider of information infrastructure technology and solutions that enable organizations of all sizes to transform the way they compete and create value from their information. Information about EMC's products and services can be found at www.EMC.com.



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