

SEEBURGER DELIVERS MASSIVE SAVINGS TO WHSMITH NEWS

November 28, 2005 --- SEEBURGER UK, a global solution provider for cross-enterprise business process integration, has announced it has been selected by WHSmith News as its long term EDI integration partner. SEEBURGER has already provided the capability to allow WHSmith News to share valuable EPOS information with ASDA via AS2 and has just delivered additional EDI adapters that allow similar integration with other major retailers, including Sainsbury and TESCO. SEEBURGER's EDI and AS2 adapters allow WHSmith News' customers to save more than £30,000 each year in VAN costs and will help ensure that the company maintains its position as a key supplier to major retailers.

WHSmith News is the oldest business with the WHSmith group. It was founded in 1792 with a mission to deliver newspapers to newsagents across England and Wales faster and more efficiently than ever before. This is now a multi-million pound business delivering more than 53 million media products each week from 500 publishers to more than 22,000 retail customers in one of the fastest moving supply chains in the world.

Chris Gibbons, WHSmith News' Business Systems Manager, comments, "As the UK's foremost news wholesaler, we require robust information systems that support our activities, link all of our sites and gather and manage huge quantities of customer data. With this information we can offer our customers an overview of the news business that is the best in our industry."

In 1998, WHSmith News decided to implement a complete SAP ERP system to drive operational efficiencies, increase accuracy and reduce waste. "A key part of our business is handling a wide variety of information to and from the publishers and retailers including EPOS data, sales performance figures and reports covering our Key Performance Indicators. In total we have around 400 different variants of messages which need to be integrated between our own systems and our customers," says Chris, adding, "With more than 99% of our products subject to sale or return, it is essential that accurate and timely information can be processed by our systems to enable us to optimise our planning and forecasting in order to minimise waste."

Until 2004, data files moving in and out of WHSmith News were handled using various, inconsistent software. However, with the growing demands of customers like ASDA to significantly reduce costs by moving away from transferring files via a Value Added Network (VAN) to less expensive message transfer protocols such as AS2, the company had to look to upgrade its business integration capabilities. Chris explains, "The version of software we were using was simply not able to take advantage of the latest messaging standards, like AS2. We then had the decision to upgrade the system or to look at alternative solutions. We decided to look at other options and carried out an exhaustive review of many of the available products on the market. We decided to adopt SAP's Exchange Infrastructure (XI) because SAP technology had become core to our entire business and we believed this would provide a solution that could be integrated far more easily with our main ERP systems."

He continues, "SAP XI does not have the full gamut of EDI adapters we require but SAP has a formal partnership with SEEBURGER, whose Business Integration Server product completes the SAP XI offering. The company with the most complete knowledge of the business to business integration we required was SEEBURGER and we decided to work directly with them to implement the system. Within a few man days of working with SEEBURGER, we were already seeing the benefit and were delivering to plan."

SEEBURGER is now working with WHSmith News to support them with more complex integration projects. "We have a policy of ensuring we are able to handle as much of our IT functions as possible. SEEBURGER is very open with us and, while we need them to provide the adapters for complex new messages, the company provides training and support that enables us to repeat these processes ourselves thereafter. This ensures we can control the costs of the system while still getting maximum benefit," says Chris.

WHSmith News is steadily replacing its existing EDI and messaging software by ensuring all new messages are mapped in SAP XI with SEEBURGER's XI Adapters. "We have had to change our integration capabilities with major retail customers like ASDA and TESCO so that we can tailor our solutions to meet their needs and ensure that it is simple and cost effective to do business with us. It also helps to ensure that we are positioned as favourably as possible with these major retailers for future collaboration. From this point of view, the value of SEEBURGER to us is vast," Chris adds.

Looking to the future, WHSmith News is currently working with SEEBURGER to deliver an electronic invoicing solution. Chris explains, "The sheer quantity of paper we use in our current invoicing processes is truly staggering. We have to send individual invoices to retail outlets, with an average of 400 lines on each, and then have to send a consolidated invoice to that retailer's head office. For larger retailers we can produce up to 2,500 pages of invoices in one week. By transferring this to a single electronic invoice we can save a staggering amount in paper and printing costs alone. However, the true benefit of electronic invoicing is to our customers with the increased accuracy it generates and the ease with which the invoice can move through the processing workflow it significantly reduces their costs in processing. Accuracy is significantly increased because invoices no longer need to be re-keyed manually and overall there is a much greater chance of the invoice moving through to electronic remittance without complication."

Chris Gibbons concludes, "The very nature of our business means we are not going to spend money on IT systems unless there are considerable savings to be made. We have estimated that the SEEBURGER solution will have an ROI of just over a year and will continue to make huge savings thereafter. It is an excellent solution that has been implemented quickly and efficiently by highly competent consultants. The company has been highly professional throughout our relationship and they have an honest, hard working approach that means when they promise to deliver, they do deliver."

About SEEBURGER

SEEBURGER is a leading provider of global business integration solutions designed to optimise transactions throughout the extended enterprise by automating trading relationships with all partners regardless of their size and technical resources. Launched in 1986 to provide integration solutions to the automotive industry in Germany, the company is now ranked as a leader among the business-to-business gateway providers by top industry analysts, and serves over 6,500 customers in 35 countries across more than 15 industries through its flagship B2B Gateway and related products and services. SEEBURGER was formed in Germany in 1986 and now has 16 offices based in Europe, Asia Pacific and North America. For more information, visit www.SEEBURGER.com

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