



Use of EDI adapters yields cost savings

CRH optimises electronic data exchange with a solution by SEEBURGER

CRH is an international market leader in building materials and maintains intensive relations with parties in the building chain. CRH's European organisation is divided into three divisions; Products, Materials and Distribution. To ensure optimum communication with all its stakeholders, CRH Products Europe called on SEEBURGER to standardise its message traffic and to integrate it with SAP.

SAP rollout as a starting point

In 2011, CRH embarked on a SAP rollout with the aim of achieving cost efficiencies by harmonizing the ERP infrastructure. To this end, CRH centralised its logistic processes and business administration through an international rollout of SAP ERP. Because an organisational level was eliminated in the process, direct communication was required between CRH and its operational organisations and customers, including DIY retail stores such as Bauhaus and Hagebau as well as builders merchants companies like Eurobaustoff. This resulted in a communication issue, as the operational organisations and customers used different types of message formats to exchange files such as invoices, orders and order confirmations.

It is virtually impossible to use a single format for the data exchange with the various national and international partners, since these parties often use their own interpretation of the EDI standard. This meant EDI adapters were needed that supported various message formats and were able to simply and efficiently convert messages from and into the SAP-based format used at CRH. The latter selected EDI adapters for SAP PI developed by SEEBURGER.

Ralf Decker, SAP Competence Center Manager at CRH: *"We needed to have a very solid foundation for combining SAP and the EDI adapters to automate the data exchange between the different organisational levels. This foundation had to be usable for the entire organisation. It also had to be scalable to simplify future rollouts. Seeburger was capable of helping us to achieve this."*

Criteria for the selection of SEEBURGER

SEEBURGER's in-depth knowledge and expertise was pivotal to CRH's selection of its EDI adapters. Its years of experience and leading position in the field of business-to-business integration made SEEBURGER the ideal partner for CRH.

"SEEBURGER is an important knowledge partner that allows our operational organisations to independently provide customers with advice and to easily connect them to the EDI adapters. This would have been impossible without the high level of expertise that SEEBURGER possesses. I can always count on them to come up with out-of-the-box ideas that result in a fitting solution," explains Ralf Decker.

Significant cost savings

Using SEEBURGER's EDI adapters, CRH is able to optimise the data exchange with customers and suppliers. Orders from customers of CRH are automatically converted into the message format used by CRH and transferred to their SAP ECC system. This allows CRH and their customers to achieve considerable cost savings, since all data is automatically converted and forwarded. This minimises the number of manual ordering and invoicing processes and eliminates errors. Moreover, data can be exchanged with greater ease, speed, and efficiency.

Thanks to the close cooperation with SEEBURGER, CRH now possesses all of the expertise required to maintain and manage the EDI adapters in a simple way. This approach has not only resulted in cost savings but has also allowed CRH to reinforce its relations with its operational organisations and customers. It is now able to cater for the needs of all the stakeholders through streamlined data exchange that supports any message format. Added to which, users can track the status of each order via a web portal. This lends the process greater insight and transparency.

SAP and the EDI adapters are rolled out to ten different operational organisations of CRH in three different countries: Belgium, The Netherlands and Germany.

A foundation for the future

"SEEBURGER has really proven its worth with this project. It was crucial for us to setup the entire EDI project within ten months time. Speed and solid coordination were therefore of the essence. The SEEBURGER team embarked on the project in a highly professional and enthusiastic way. Their proper level of expertise allows them to identify and take all the steps that are required to achieve an end result of which we are very proud of. In the future, we want to use SEEBURGER's EDI adapters for other message formats as well," concludes Decker.