



New Impetus for EDI Systems: Optibelt Switches to Retarus

Customer

Arntz Optibelt Group
www.optibelt.com

Industry

Manufacturing

Activities

Migrating the global EDI infrastructure

The Arntz Optibelt Group is replacing their multiple EDI systems, previously operated in parallel by several providers, with one consolidated solution. In Retarus and its Managed EDI Services, the company has found an experienced service provider able to accomplish the migration of their comprehensive processes in the required time and quality.

Initial Situation

The Arntz Optibelt Group is one of the leading manufacturers of high-performance drive belts around the world. Optibelt products are put to use in mechanical engineering, the automotive industry, farming machinery as well as in the household appliances industry. The company has around 2,000 employees and eight production facilities in Europe and Asia.

In terms of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), Optibelt was running an infrastructure built up over the course of twenty years. There were also more than 200 different processes, many of which were highly complex, including a multitude of connections to renowned automobile manufacturers and international technical distributors. Thus far the company had relied on two EDI converters from different providers for their EDI needs, as well as a solution developed in-house.

Objective

New EDI connections, in particular, could no longer be implemented with the existing solutions, as the enormous resources required were not available. There were especially restrictions with regard to the converters: Common formats, for instance the EDI data transmission standard ANSI X12 or various XML derivatives, could only be mapped with disproportionate effort and at huge cost. As a consequence, standard technical solutions could only be achieved in a very rudimentary way with the means at the company's disposal.

That's why Optibelt decided to make the change to a specialist service provider for Managed EDI Services, so that they would no longer have to run their own EDI converters. This step was also encouraged by the fact that during the same time period it was also decided to switch the ERP system over to the market leader SAP.

Primary Challenges

After in-depth analysis, Optibelt decided to go with Retarus' services. This made it possible for the company to now consolidate the differing and self-operated systems with one external service provider.

One special challenge was posed by the rescheduling of the SAP launch date at Optibelt. As a result, the managers responsible for the project at Optibelt and Retarus opted to switch over to an agile approach to the management of the project. This was closely aligned with the requirements of the ERP launch.

Another particularly positive outcome of this was that the SAP requirements for the migration of each of the existing processes could directly be taken into consideration as a template for the data interchange formats between Retarus and Optibelt.



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Alexander Grothe, eCommerce Team Leader, Optibelt GmbH

Benefits

Already in parallel with the migration, additional connections could be set up with strategic partners. During ongoing operation of the new EDI system it is now also possible to establish connections with new customers significantly more quickly. Before the change to Retarus, it was occasionally only possible to set up connections with customers and other external communication partners with long delays due to limited technical and organizational resources.

Thanks to Retarus' uniform Managed EDI Services, Optibelt also benefits from increased efficiency in their paperless administration of delivery schedules and from considerable improvements to their notification mechanisms in ordering and procurement procedures. Furthermore, the processing of credit notes from large customers was also made easier.

Conclusion

“The efficient, neat implementation did not only win us over, but also our business partners,” Alexander Grothe, eCommerce Team Leader at Optibelt sums up the EDI project. “In particular, the speedy implementation of industry-specific standards, such as VDA 4938, was met with a very positive response by our customers in the automotive industry. One big automobile manufacturer expressly pointed out the quick reaction times and general expertise of the Retarus team.”

The support from Retarus over the full duration of the project, which ran for several years, was also the factor that led to a positive overall conclusion at Optibelt. That's why, in addition to the SAP integration, the next project is already lined up. The team led by Alexander Grothe is currently working on implementing Retarus Long Term Archiving. This service enables the secure and reliable archiving of all business-critical communication transmitted via EDI. Retarus facilitates archiving which is legally compliant in over 50 countries.

Key Facts



Supports industry-specific standards



Flexibly adapts to meet new requirements



High availability



No investment in hardware or software