



Consolidating the IT landscape

The integration of data and processes has been a focal point in the logistics sector for many years. Over 15 years, the Gebrüder Weiss GmbH developed various solutions for the optimization of data processing which evolved into a highly complex and diversified IT landscape. In order to consolidate this IT landscape, to reduce maintenance efforts and achieve higher transparency in tracing the data flow, Gebrüder Weiss decided to implement the inubit BPM-Suite.



About Gebrüder Weiss GmbH

The Gebrüder Weiss GmbH is the biggest private owned freight forwarder in Austria and already exists for 550 years. Their market includes the alpine-danubian-region “from Basel to Bucharest” as well as China, Hong Kong, and Singapore. In 2003 the Gebrüder Weiss Group transported almost 4,6 million shipments and therewith achieved a business volume of more than 600 million Euros with more than 3.500 employees.

In the past 15 years the Gebrüder Weiss GmbH too aimed for the optimization of data processing. Therefore own IT-systems were developed, which could realize special requirements.

Requirements

The IT architecture had grown over 15 years and the EDI communication was spread across several EDI server. This involved high efforts which were to be reduced with the introduction of an EAI standard software:

- ▶ Connection of about 100 partners and 400 customers, exchange of highly heterogeneous message formats, i.e. record structures, EDIFACT, customer specific formats, XML and binary files
- ▶ Connection to FTP, E-Mail, mailboxes (IBM, Eurolog, Telecom) and MQ-Series
- ▶ Reduction of maintenance and evaluation efforts, easy tracing of data flows, increase in performance, introduction of central error handling

Approach

Within a proof of concept (POC) the inubit BPM-Suite convinced thanks to its modern architecture, its modular construction and good user/role-concept. After a five day training, a core team of Gebrüder Weiss employees was able to conduct basic works independently:

- ▶ Conversion of FlatFiles, XML processing, connection to database and workflow management, error detection and correction within the POC
- ▶ Connection of individual applications, development of separate plug-ins for special tasks, definition of central data models, definition of a deployment process by the Gebrüder Weiss employees

Results

Thanks to the implementation of the integration project all departments from overland transportation via air and sea freight up to storage, logistics and finances could be integrated:

- ▶ Clear IT architecture which ensures a safe and quick data transfer
- ▶ Reduced error rate and maintenance costs thanks to less interfaces and media breaks

Integration of the internal and external data traffic

Due to the heterogeneous IT landscape the EDI-communication of the Gebrüder Weiss GmbH was operated on several EDI-servers. On one hand this increased the maintenance efforts, on the other hand additional efforts for evaluation arose, because the data was distributed over several computers. In addition, the tracing of the data streams across different computers was very difficult. As a result of this sequential architecture, which was not cluster-capable, performance problems arose and a precise identification of single data packages was no longer possible. A central error handling was also impossible because too many log files existed. For this reason the implementation of a standard software, which should meet very complex requirements, was planned.

Due to the connection of about 100 partners and 400 customers, very heterogeneous message formats and technical connections had to be realized with the EAI-software. Amongst others these heterogeneous formats are record structures, EDIFACT, customer specific formats, XML, and binary files. Concerning the use of particular communication ways, connections to FTP, E-Mail, mailboxes (IBM, Eurolog, Telecom) and MQ-series have to be supported.

Proof of concept

In order to be able to evaluate the various EAI-software products, the Gebrüder Weiss GmbH performed a market analysis. During a workshop the list of all providers was constrained. In another workshop the remaining providers could present their EAI-product and perform a live scenario.

The inubit BPM-Suite could convince because of its modern architecture, its modular construction and its outstanding user/role-concept. Further benefits of the inubit BPM-Suite were that it is continuously built upon open standards and offers a version management. The fact that inubit could offer a global group license has also been determining since the Gebrüder Weiss GmbH intended to use the EAI-tool across the group.

The final decision of the Gebrüder Weiss has been made between inubit and one other provider. Therefore a proof of concept (POC) was arranged. The main focus of the POC-scenarios on one hand was the conversion of flat files, XML-processing, database connection as well as workflow navi-

gation and on the other hand the integration of the products into the existing software as well as the demonstration of error detection and error correction possibilities.

The reasons for the final decision in favor of inubit were the enormous commitment, the convincing results of the POC, the attractive license model and the flexibility (e.g. the promise to add specific functionalities to the next release of the inubit BPM-Suite).

“The inubit BPM-Suite is an innovative tool for today’s and future integration scenarios.”

Mario Nesensohn, initiator of the EAI project

The realization of the integration solution

Due to the extensive data volume within the Gebrüder Weiß Group, the implementation of the central integration platform cannot be realized ad hoc for all sections. Porting the integration lines to the inubit BPM-Suite is therefore done step-by-step.

Fundamental activities like the connection to specific individual applications or the development of self developed plug-ins for special tasks are carried out directly by employees of the Gebrüder Weiss. These preliminary steps also include the definition of central data models and setting up a deployment process.

To this end a core team was formed, which after a five day training course by inubit is able to independently carry out the tasks specified above.

Thanks to the successfully realized integration project, the Gebrüder Weiss now dispose of a clearly arranged IT-architecture, which is able to realize the data transfer safe and fast and which enormously reduces the maintenance costs and the error rate through the omission of numerous interfaces and media breaks. All systems communicate via the inubit BPM-Suite, which in turn forwards the data to the relevant sections. Thereby all company sections are involved from overland transportation and air and sea freight up to storage and logistics as well as the financial section SAP.