



Medium-sized Specialized Trader Enters e-Business

In order to achieve efficient communication with business partners and reduce internal process costs, the Zwegart Fachhandelsgruppe introduces the inubit BPM-Suite. In only eight weeks an online shop was set up with the portal solution based on the inubit BPM-Suite, suppliers and retailers were connected to the internal AS/400 based ERP system and the connection of the Zwegart sales force via mobile devices such as PDA implemented.



About Zwegart Fachhandelsgruppe

The hardware store Walter Zwegart KG was founded in 1874 and is steeped in tradition. In decades they developed to the trade group Zwegart, a major wholesale merchant for hardware that now has eight special markets in Germany and another one in Hungary.

Meanwhile, the Zwegart assortment offers 120,000 articles like protective clothing, electric and other tools, sanitary technique, construction fittings, mounting technique, and steel.

Requirements

In order to simplify the cooperation with business partners and to reduce internal process costs, an e-Business solution was to be introduced:

- ▶ Connection of the most important suppliers, retailers and Zwegart sales staff to the internal AS/400 based ERP system
- ▶ Display of prices and article availabilities for purchases via the internet portal

Solution

The adaptive design of the inubit software allows a simple, fast, and cost-effective integration of heterogeneous IT systems. The product already offers a multitude of system connectors and format adapters:

- ▶ Operation of the inubit BPM-Suite and the portal component built on this as Java application in a J2EE application server
- ▶ Connection of heterogeneous IT systems via i.e. EDIFACT, XML, xCBL, openTRANS
- ▶ Connection of the online shop to the ERP system via XML interface

Results Achieved

The entire e-Business solution could be implemented within eight weeks, return on investment for the project was achieved in a few months:

- ▶ Set-up of an internet-portal with the portal solution based on the inubit BPM-Suite that presently offers 120,000 articles as a multi-supplier catalog
- ▶ Display of ERP prices individual to customers, real-time availability check of articles
- ▶ Synchronous data exchange between the portal and the ERP system
- ▶ Order processing without multiple input and change of media
- ▶ Stepwise completion of the system by connecting external service providers (e.g. payment) and mobile devices of staff members

The Gärtringen-based trade group Walter Zweggart KG, decided to implement an e-business solution to simplify the co-operation with business associates and to cut the costs of internal processes.

Purpose of the project was to give customers information about specific prices and availability of requested articles, when ordering over the Internet. Furthermore, the most important suppliers, retailers, and sales representatives should be connected to the in-house AS/400-based enterprise resource planning system. This requirement was crucial since most e-business applications do not support legacy systems.

Convenient online shopping

Using the inubit Portal Solution which is based upon the inubit BPM-Suite a portal was established that presently offers 120,000 articles as a multi-supplier catalog. Price and availability are offered on mouse click. The chosen articles are put in a shopping cart and are ordered online after examination. On request, individual orders can be stored as sample shopping lists. They are available for the next online shopping trip.

A further innovation is the order tracking. This enables customers to track an order online anytime (the status can be acknowledged, in preparation, goods shipped as a whole or partial delivery, or delivery received).

Integration of the AS/400-based ERP system

The connection of the internet portal to the AS/400-based enterprise resource planning system (ERP), and the integration of the participating suppliers, retailers, and sales representatives is accomplished by the inubit BPM-Suite.

The adaptive design of the software allows a simple, fast, and cost-effective integration of heterogeneous IT systems. The basic product already offers a multitude of system connectors and format adapters.

Technical description

The inubit BPM-Suite and the thereon based inubit Portal Component are conducted as Java-applications by a J2EE-application server. The integration of the Zweggart portal was realized with the standard edition of the inubit BPM-Suite appliance. This is an optimally phased software and hardware solution based on blade-server-technology, which

runs on Linux. The transformation of the various data formats is done in preconfigured workflows within the inubit BPM-Suite.



Dr. Wolfgang Zweggart, Managing Director

“We searched for a replacement for our first e-business application. Eight weeks after the project was started the new e-business solution was realized completely and on schedule. We are enthusiastic. Due to the low costs and the rapid realization we are now able to stepwise connect further customers and suppliers, which enables us to further cut the costs of our processes.”

Specific connectors were used to connect the inubit Suite to the AS/400-based enterprise resource planning system XHDS. These connectors access real-time data of the system and provide it within the server. The connection of the portal was realized by an XML interface. This ensures parallelism of article and customer master data in the portal as well as in the ERP. Requests to the ERP about prices and availabilities are processed synchronously and with high performance.

Not only static data like article and master data and design drawings but also dynamic data like for example the results of the current stock keeping are provided by the AS/400-based ERP system and are made available in the portal.

Intended expansion of the e-business solution

Due to the modular design of the inubit BPM-Suite stepwise extensions and cost-effective integration of further suppliers and business partners are easily realized via XML or EDI.

New customers, who order at Zweggart's, will be enabled to conduct the entire payment process via a service provider. The necessary information is synchronized by the inubit BPM-Suite and made available to the payment service provider after the order is completed and the goods are delivered.

In a further step Zweggart's sales representatives will be connected to the portal via mobile devices like PDAs. This will enable sales representatives on site to access the portal offline and to have at their disposal the information about the goods' specification, price and availability.

inubit Case Study: Zwegart Fachhandelsgruppe



A customer can immediately choose and decide about an order after being advised by the Zwegart expert who will then initiate the order. The advantage: cumbersome forms or time-consuming telephone calls are left out; the order is immediately processed. This ensures in short-term that the ordered goods are delivered on time to the right place without noticeable effort.

Via BMEcat and openTRANS the Zwegart portal will be connected to further shops and market places in the same line of business, in order to exchange orders and order-acknowledgements electronically.