

Sterling Commerce provides Ideal Standard with a collaborative environment and foundation for growth



Ideal Standard

Location

Italy

Industry

Retail/CPG

Business challenge

Maintain a leading position in global manufacturing and gain market share outside the United States

Solution

- Sterling Integrator®
- Gentran:Server®
- Connect:Direct®

Benefits

- Easier expansion
- Ease of implementation
- Lower total cost of ownership

“Working with Sterling Commerce has exceeded our expectations. The dedicated team of consultants fully understood our business challenges and ensured the roll out across the European region was smooth and efficient, with minimal disruption to our business operations.”

Loris Dal Magro
IT Director South Europe,
Ideal Standard

Ideal Standard

Customer background

A division of American Standard Companies, Ideal Standard® is the world's leading provider of bathroom systems and kitchen fixtures. With customers in over 40 countries, American Standard employs 60,000 people across three business operations: Trane (air conditioning), American Standard® and Ideal Standard® (bathroom and kitchen products, catering to consumer and commercial markets respectively), and Wabco (vehicle control systems).

Business challenge

To maintain a leading position in global manufacturing, and in an effort to gain market share outside of the United States, the company embarked on an aggressive expansion strategy, establishing new wholesale distribution points in markets such as Russia and the Middle East.

Ideal Standard needed a better approach to serving and conducting business with its trading-partner community. The company's existing communications system was unable to provide the visibility and control required of a growing business, and lacked the ability to accommodate varying customer demands based on geographical and technological differences.

Ideal Standard required a unified system to add new partners easily, sustain ongoing and future growth and offer a single interface. The system also needed to meet internal integration requirements, particularly data verification and mapping into Ideal Standard's SAP system.

Ideal Standard wanted a centralised system to cut through the complexity of multiple communication protocols and country standards. For example, all orders in the UK were received via EDI, whereas in Italy, only 40 percent of orders were EDI-based.

The increasingly high volumes of data processing from European expansion threatened to drive costs up. There was no centralised data-management tool for effectively controlling the growing volumes of invoices and orders. The need to maintain disparate IT systems also increased costs. Error control and notification were done manually for the most part. Since system queries had to be run every few hours to verify data integrity and check for errors, decisions were often based on invalid or incomplete data. An integrated system with process automation could enable Ideal Standard to resolve invoice and order issues in minutes instead of days.

"We chose Sterling Integrator on the basis of its functionality, scalability and flexibility. The Sterling Commerce solution enables us to automate manual processes and harmonise business processes and disparate IT systems. It is now easy for us to deploy and manage multiple trading partners in a collaborative trading community environment," said Loris Dal Magro, IT Director South Europe, Ideal Standard.

Solution

Ideal Standard chose Sterling Commerce to provide a collaborative environment that would respond to customer demands and provide a solid foundation for continued business growth. Sterling Integrator, the core of the solution, provides full-featured B2B communications and management, translation, enterprise integration, business process management (BPM) and business activity monitoring (BAM) in one comprehensive suite.

Although systems and standards differ among trading partners and countries, the underlying processes are similar. Sterling Integrator manages both external collaboration and internal data flow. Rich features, such as graphical mapping, now provide greater visibility and control over incoming messages. Ideal Standard can now monitor irregularities and highlight lost or delayed orders and invoices.

In addition to translation capabilities, Sterling Integrator provides auditing, tracking and event-driven message-management services that help ensure the proper routing of incoming order confirmations, shipping notifications and invoices.

Because Sterling Integrator is built on the Sterling Commerce Multi-Enterprise Services Architecture, a comprehensive development and integration platform, Ideal Standard was able to roll out the new system in phases, as the company's EMEA operation expanded. The seamless integration between partners, applications and business centers has already reduced the time required to process orders and invoices.

Key benefits

Loris Dal Magro, IT Director Ideal Standard South Europe, said of the implementation, "It is now easy for us to deploy and manage multiple trading partners in a collaborative trading community environment." The most important benefits were:

Increased sales – By enabling Ideal Standard to meet data and communication standards requirements across countries, Sterling Integrator has made it possible for Ideal Standard to successfully onboard additional wholesale points of sale.

Improved customer service – Improved collaboration (through easier partner onboarding, comprehensive

support for customers' electronic business requirements, and greater responsiveness to their demands) has enhanced relationships with customers.

Ability to react to events – Sterling Integrator sends automatic notifications of unreceived or erroneous orders. Errors are now reported within minutes rather than hours, freeing up employees who previously conducted frequent manual checks. Now, fewer orders are mislaid or delayed.

Easier expansion – The solution enables Ideal Standard to trade with all customers, regardless of messaging formats, using a single, integrated platform. Sterling Integrator supports the standards the company needs as it expands into new markets.

Ease of implementation – The Sterling Integrator rollout was completed without any disruption to Ideal Standard's customers and within project timescales. Ideal Standard's in-house team had full support from Sterling Commerce to complete the rollout and is now able to manage the system internally.

Lower total cost of ownership – ROI was achieved within 18 months through enhanced business functionality, such as systems monitoring, improved system control and notification management. Ideal Standard can now support Vendor Managed Inventory (VMI). The overall cost of IT ownership has decreased and is now contained within a single maintenance fee.

About Sterling Commerce

Sterling Commerce, an AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) company, helps companies optimise and transform their Business Collaboration Network to accelerate revenues and reduce costs. Sterling Commerce provides more than 18,000 customers worldwide with applications and integration solutions to connect, communicate and collaborate inside and outside their enterprise. More information can be found at www.sterlingcommerce.co.uk.

Sterling Commerce
An AT&T Company

For all Sterling Commerce offices worldwide, visit www.sterlingcommerce.com

©2005 – 2010, Sterling Commerce, Inc.
All rights reserved. Sterling Commerce and the Sterling Commerce logo are trademarks of Sterling Commerce, Inc. or its affiliated companies. All products referenced are the service marks, trademarks, or registered marks of their respective owners. Printed in Europe.
Neither this case study nor any portion thereof may be used or distributed with any other material without the express written consent of Sterling Commerce.
SC0299E 06/10