

Sterling Commerce helps Ajinomoto raise customer service standards



A taste of the future.
AJINOMOTO

Location

Tokyo, Japan

Industry

Food Manufacturing

Revenue

1,106.8 billion Yen in 2007 (approx. 8.92 billion USD)

Business challenge

Ability to harness complex, customer-centric order fulfillment processes across business divisions

Solution

Sterling Order Management™

Benefits

- Enhanced customer satisfaction by promising availability and serving the distributors and retailers on their terms
- Single view of the order across business divisions to customers and Ajinomoto Corporate
- Agility in responding to the changes in the business environment
- Leverage investments in existing IT systems

Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

Customer background

Founded in 1909, Tokyo-based Ajinomoto Corporation is a leading household brand in the food industry. Ajinomoto (a name literally translated in English as “Essence of Taste”) is the largest producer of seasonings as well as the top producer of lysine and other amino and nucleic acids used in sweeteners and nutritional supplements. The company operates in 23 countries and has 105 manufacturing plants worldwide.

Business challenge

Growing business volumes, changing customer preferences and the need for achieving a consolidated view of the enterprise using the existing legacy

applications was a real challenge. As a result, Ajinomoto experienced challenges in serving the customer on their terms.

“We had to adhere to the customer specific Service Level Agreements (SLAs) around product freshness and delivery,” states Mr. Yamada, Executive Officer and Director of Ajinomoto’s IS Division. “Also, in the multi-division structure we followed, the view at the order level was lost. Customers received multiple invoices by division for a single order, and this naturally posed problems at both the customer and corporate levels. We were exposing our internal structure to the customer while they were viewing the company as one.”

“Sterling Order Management is well suited to retail businesses. Our company sometimes receives as many as 100,000 product orders in just two hours. We absolutely must have a system to process these orders swiftly. On a visit to the States, I saw for myself many companies were using this product to do business, and I decided it would work for us.”

Mr. Hiromi Yamada
Executive Officer and Director,
Ajinomoto Corporation

Solution

Ajinomoto viewed Sterling Order Management as a scalable, process-oriented, market-leading application that the company needed to leverage investments in existing systems. Sterling Order Management was that one common layer serving the needs of the enterprise while still offering the flexibility for each division. Now the company has global visibility of orders and the inventory across all demand and fulfillment channels.

Sterling Order Management intelligently brokers orders across many disparate systems and manages the orders which are both electronically and manually entered by Customer Service Representatives. After a series of pre-checks, the orders are routed to the respective divisions for fulfillment. Sterling Order Management works in tandem with other existing applications to execute inventory checks, help determine the node from which the order is to be fulfilled based on who the customer is, what the SLA with respect to item freshness or shelf life is, order delivery, truck route, and more, and appropriately releases the order to the warehouse for fulfillment.

The flexibility of the Sterling Order Management solution allows Ajinomoto to make changes to business processes on the fly. Customer Service Representatives can now modify customer orders from the time they are released to the warehouse for fulfillment up until the shipment is loaded onto the truck for delivery.

As the orders are entered and fulfilled across multiple internal and external entities, it becomes very difficult to efficiently manage all the processes needed to provide a uniform customer experience. With Sterling Order Management, over 100,000 orders for several different products from multiple sales channels are processed swiftly in just two hours thus enabling Ajinomoto to ensure customer satisfaction with accurate deadlines and prompt delivery.

“In the highly competitive and time-sensitive food business we are in, it is critical to have processes, systems and tools that ensure the highest level of customer satisfaction,” says Mr. Yamada. “Sterling Commerce has done a remarkable job in helping us achieve this objective. They have reinforced the faith we have had at the time of signing them up as a lead solution provider.”

About Sterling Commerce

Sterling Commerce, an AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) company, helps companies optimize and transform their Business Collaboration Network quickly, easily and securely so they can accelerate revenues, reduce costs and protect their enterprise. Sterling Commerce provides more than 30,000 customers worldwide with applications and integration solutions to connect, communicate and collaborate with their customers, partners and suppliers.

Learn more at www.sterlingcommerce.com.

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