



A cloud-based supplier portal for resilient supply chain management

Case study: Schwarzmüller

Industry profile

Schwarzmüller Group specializes in the production of towed commercial vehicles such as tank vehicles and low-bed semitrailers, a business segment that involves a large number of suppliers and other business partners. The procurement and the materials planning departments are in regular ongoing contact with those partners in order to carry out the ordering process. Every order is submitted with a set of design drawings, technical descriptions, and purchase order documents. These drawings have to be obtained from the design department in advance. In processes such as these, locating the latest version and sending it to the right supplier at the right time can be a challenge, especially if the process is performed manually or by e-mail. To be able to handle this process in a way that is both traceable and deadline-oriented, the company was looking for a process-driven software solution.



“I don’t often come across projects – especially in the IT field – that are completed on budget and on time. Fabasoft Approve delivered perfectly in that regard and even implemented modified requirements at short notice throughout the course of the project.”

Johann Kropf, Head of Information Technology
Wilhelm Schwarzmüller GmbH

The task

Approve on Fabasoft PROCECO now provides a separate portal for each supplier. Schwarzmüller's materials planning department keeps track of every ongoing project from a central location. Now that the suppliers can access all required documents in a way that is structured and organized, nothing stands in the way of efficient order processing. When a new document version becomes available, the relevant supplier receives an automatic notification highlighting any discrepancies with respect to the previous order. By viewing the upload status, which can comprise several hundred drawings, the supplier can see how many documents have been uploaded and how many are still pending for a given order. The supplier then has three months to retrieve the documents. Once the retrieval period has expired, predefined deletion rules are applied to clean up the portal.

Digital supplier portal

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Simple process for integrating new suppliers

The 150 suppliers that make up Schwarzmüller's current supplier base are also reaping the benefits of Approve, and new suppliers can begin using the software solution right away without elaborate installation or any prior training. Keeping suppliers informed about pending orders at an early stage makes it possible to maintain a seamless supply chain. The connection to the existing ERP (enterprise resource planning) system runs via a standard interface with no programming required. After the documents for a particular supplier have been approved, they

are transferred to the supplier portal collectively. Sending flash drives and piles of paper by postal mail is now a thing of the past. Permanent availability in the cloud, a multilingual user interface, and secure two-factor authentication provide the most effective foundation for connecting Schwarzmüller with its global supplier base. In addition, clearly arranged status displays and automatic versioning for technical documents ensure that the flow of information in projects is transparent.

Greater efficiency with automated processes

The new cloud-based supplier portal was up and running productively after a total of two months. "Approve's large number of standard interfaces and its ease of use made it really easy to connect to our system," confirms Johann Kropf, Head of Information Technology at Schwarzmüller. By digitalizing the ordering and information management processes, Schwarzmüller successfully achieved the targeted reduction in its manual workflows. The objective of establishing an efficient and resilient supply chain was realized. "To put it in terms of hard facts: Approve frees up several hours of work per week for an employee, who can use the extra bandwidth to manage additional projects," says Kropf enthusiastically.

About Schwarzmüller

The Schwarzmüller Group is one of Europe's largest full-service providers for utility commercial vehicles. The company develops, produces, and services premium vehicles for bespoke added-value transport solutions.

www.schwarzmueller.com