

## DEVOTED TO DATA TRANSPORT

### Reliable electronic data interchange (EDI) thanks to Lobster software

**In today's interconnected world, data exchange in the transport and logistics sector is almost entirely carried out electronically. Customers want to receive their goods at a moment's notice, ideally on demand. The challenges faced by logistics service providers are mounting as processes become faster and more complex. EDI has become a key competitive factor. This is why Gartner has selected Lobster\_data, Lobster's data integration software.**

800,000 shipments by road and 30,000 by rail – that's the number of consignments Gartner Transport Holding GmbH processes every year. To make this happen, vast quantities of data need to not only flow back and forth between Gartner and its partners, but also between the transport company's various in-house departments. Markus Furlinger, IT Project Manager in charge of Lobster\_data at Gartner, explains, "errors within these complex processes, caused by incorrect data entry for example, can add up costs quickly – something we're definitely keen to avoid". This is precisely why Gartner has opted to integrate its customers via EDI – with the help of Lobster\_data. Thanks to the Lobster software, fleets stay on the move meaning goods are delivered to customers right on schedule.

### Customer integration through EDI

Today, customers are no longer forced to send faxes. Instead, they simply send Gartner their orders in EDI format. The software then automatically transfers the information to their ERP system for processing. In the meantime, Lobster\_data also creates a customer master file, so no addresses have to be entered by hand. "What was once taken care of manually has now been automated. Mistakes rarely happen", Markus explains.

Gartner has entered into credit arrangements with a number of its customers. Lobster\_data automatically checks whether a credit allowance is authorised. If the system posts too few or too many transactions, the software immediately recognises the discrepancy and reports it to the Control Centre. This means Gartner employees can correct any mistakes before the customer settles the account.

### No programming knowledge required

"Connecting new customers was very complex with our old EDI converter. That's all changed thanks to Lobster\_data. I don't need any prior knowledge of programming, everything is simple, clearly laid out and straightforward", says Markus. The tool contains over 4,000 templates for ERP system interfaces and supports all common data exchange protocols. "In the past, we would have to schedule at least three meetings with external programmers to discuss next steps. Now, we can connect with our customers ourselves."

### **Statistical analysis**

With the help of the software, IT staff can effortlessly put together performance statistics that the system then automatically emails to the various department heads within the company. This means that managers can keep an eye on exactly how their department performed the day before or the month prior. This data includes, for example, how many orders were received in total, how high the proportion of empty space was and how operational performance is holding up. Every bit of data that the ERP system processes can be evaluated, summarised and presented in statistical terms.

### **Fleet management**

“In some departments, we’ve even gone one step further”, explains Markus. Gartner is now also using the software to support its fleet management. Every lorry that arrives in the depot at their Lambach headquarters drives over a recessed tyre-tester. It measures the vehicles’ tyre pressures and treads. If the values measured fall below pre-defined limits, Lobster\_data automatically notifies the driver – either by text message or via the lorry’s GPS system. The tool automatically identifies the vehicle, and establishes the drivers’ nationality, so the notification can be sent in their native language – thereby avoiding misunderstandings.

“We’ve used the software across the Group for over five years now. We really come to rely on Lobster\_data”, reports Markus.

EDI has become a key competitive factor in the industry. And there’s no denying that the sector would be at a standstill without EDI. This is something the Gartner Group is very much aware of. They’re not the leading private transport company in Austria for nothing!