



MENRAD MAINTAINS A CLEAR VIEW

The manufacturer of spectacle frames links opticians to ERP system using Lobster

Menrad supplies 40,000 customers worldwide, mostly opticians and chain stores. If you were to draw their customer relations on a globe, a complex, almost inscrutable network would emerge, starting for example from Germany going to France, Holland, England, Ireland, Austria, China, Dubai, Turkey, Switzerland and back again. Given this context connecting clients to the company's IT system is a real challenge. For this reason Menrad relies on Lobster's data integration software, Lobster_data.

Menrad receives orders in various different data formats. French customers, for example, often use the OPTO11 and OPTO33 standard, the German customers LOOK4 or FORSA standard. In addition, there are countless in-house formats that differ from optician to optician. Thus, for the IT system at Menrad to process the orders, it must convert each format first. Previously a separate interface was programmed for each client, today this is completed by Lobster's data integration software, Lobster_data.

Communication with external partners

Erol Wödl, Head of Organisation and Data Processing at Menrad and responsible for Lobster_data smiles: "Lobster_data simplifies the communication with external partners." When the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system was switched to a new system developed by Menrad, input and output formats were designed, the so-called "Menrad interface". Lobster_data now converts the different customer formats into the Menrad format and vice versa.

"Using Lobster_data we are able to automate the order process from order entry to invoicing for a number of clients," says Erol Wödl. Once the customer order (Order Format) is received, the Menrad IT system will send an order confirmation (Order-Response Format), trigger the shipment and provide the data in the advanced shipping note format. Finally, the bill (Invoice Format) is sent. Should customers or customer groups want their invoices or invoice copies only via electronic data interchange (EDI), this is no longer a problem.



Time saving and fast implementation

"In the past this process was very time consuming," says Erol Wödl. Format conversions had to be programmed, thereafter the data exchange was implemented. Today Menrad no longer needs to write scripts, because Lobster_data already contains multiple templates and supports the entire process

from conversion to data exchange. "This way we can fully concentrate on our core competency in the IT department." Lobster_data was implemented by Lobster in just 32 days. Eleven EDI partners were linked to the new system. These customer groups have up to 1000 members. In France alone, 19 purchasing groups are connected with Menrad via their EDI partner Eyes Road. "You won't find anything easier," Erol Wödl is convinced.