



## THINK GLOBAL, ACT LOCAL

With Lobster\_data, logistics expert Schnellecke can manage its just-in-time (JIT) and just-in-sequence (JIS) requests from a variety of locations – always in close collaboration with its customers. Managing data locally is particularly important when it comes to production-synchronised processes. For this reason, in addition to its central Lobster\_data system in Wolfsburg, Schnellecke has further installed instances in Leipzig, Glauchau and Bratislava in Slovakia. Lobster\_data manages all EDI traffic between their SAP system and their business partners. The decentralised entities, in turn, act as so-called data pumps', providing Schnellecke's own JIT system (SJS) with production-synchronised requests.

Lobster\_data is used to process 60,000 conversions a day at Schnellecke; 10,000 via the central Lobster\_data system in Wolfsburg and 50,000 decentral conversions for production-synchronised JIT/JIS requests. The various locations communicate directly with car manufacturers on-site, which is an indispensable advantage, given the high number of time-critical processes involved. "Lobster is not just our central EDI converter, but also our 'data pump', which receives requests and reliably forwards them to our in-house JIT system", explains Tobias Streich, EDI expert at Schnellecke Logistics.

### **An intermediary between manufacturers and suppliers**

Thanks to Lobster\_data, Schnellecke has been able to quickly adapt to new EDIFACT standards, such as those used by their main customer, Volkswagen. Whilst VW worked with traditional EDI formats, e.g. VDA4905 and VDA4915, today, they have transitioned to EDIFACT formats, like VDA4984 and VDA4938. However, since numerous suppliers are yet to make the change, Schnellecke also acts as a sort of EDI intermediary.

In practice, the process works as follows: Schnellecke receives a delivery request from VW in the new VDA4984 format, which Lobster\_data then converts and sends on to Schnellecke's SAP system. The material requirements calculation can then begin straight away. Outgoing delivery schedules are again converted by Lobster\_data, usually back into the old format, before being sent out to suppliers. Materials are also dispatched, alongside an EDI delivery note, which Lobster\_data in turn converts and transmits to the SAP system. "We're not just a logistics service provider, we're also an EDI service provider between suppliers and manufacturers. Lobster\_data makes all that possible", Tobias adds.

### **Managing complex processes in-house**

Schnellecke manages highly complex logistics processes. As Tobias explains, "external EDI service providers have little insight in the area, so we're glad we can build and maintain our mapping expertise in-house using Lobster\_data. We know our processes best, so we're best placed to quickly react to new customer requirements".

All the more true given many processes are customer-specific in the logistics industry, so flexibility is key. “Other software providers simply sell their standard mappings, which would be out of the question for us”, says Tobias. Schnellecke has already made use of a wide range of the basic mappings offered by Lobster\_data, which can then be individually redesigned for each EDI partner. In the past, IT staff would spend up to five days on one single mapping alone, today, however, it’s finished in just a day or two.

### **A platform-independent EDI system**

The EDI landscape within the automotive industry is currently undergoing something of a facelift. Modern protocols like OFTP2 and formats such as EDIFACT are gradually being introduced. Older solutions simply can’t keep up. Tobias notes, “Lobster\_data impressed us right from the start, particularly thanks to its speed, intuitive usability and platform-independent nature”. Schnellecke is able to easily connect to all databases with its new EDI software, no matter the operating system.

Companies today have to think globally but still act locally. ‘Globalisation’ is the buzzword du jour, and is something automotive manufacturers like Volkswagen now expect from their partners. Schnellecke is hitting the mark thanks to Lobster\_data. “We’re totally satisfied”, concludes Tobias.