

nexmart

TIME-SAVING PROCESSES AND INNOVATIVE SERVICES

The business-to-business platform nexMart attracts clients from the tool trade with time-saving processes and innovative services - with the data conversion tool Lobster_data plays a crucial role.

AEG, Black & Decker, Bosch and Karcher - together with 200 other suppliers of tools, fittings, hardware, wood, and technical equipment present their complete range on the business-to-business platform www.nexMart.net. About 90 percent of all the known suppliers are represented there and allow the professional dealers "one stop shopping" at its best. As the "portal to the key brands", the website went live in 2000 and has since been able to attract some 4,500-ordering dealers. This success is not surprising since nexMart is completely free and offers services in the areas of purchasing, billing and administration. What makes the portal so attractive is the permanent and central access to the 1.6 million records of product data, manuals and prices.

nexMart makes the purchasing process easy. "The entire purchase can be handled electronically via a portal and one interface," says Holger Werner, head of the "Projects & Product Management" department at nexMart. The portal is financed by the suppliers, many of which are also shareholders of nexMart.

EDI in demand

The site was conceived and developed as a virtual marketplace by businessMart AG, specialists in the development of e-business structures for entire industries. nexMart was spun off six years ago. Apart from the portal development Werner sees EDI as nexMart's core competency of the company and is growing in demand. As a result, a variety of EDI services are being offered, extending well beyond the portal. About 1,500 of the dealers already use EDI - with a strong upward trend. "As a result we have been looking at the market for appropriate solutions. That was three years ago" remembers Werner. He found Lobster_data by way of recommendation.

"Compared to other providers, the Lobster_data was not only cost effective but also more efficient, flexible and above all you don't have to be a technician to understand it," says Werner. Ultimately nexMart is a distribution company first and foremost.

Automatic data conversion and population

Six of the 35 nexMart employees are working with the Lobster_data setting up interfaces with the data conversion tool and defining conversion rules for incoming and outgoing data. The number and type of transmission paths and formats are almost unlimited. "Even faxes are processed by us with a high degree of automation," says Werner.

Time-saving processes and innovative services

Lobster_data detects the available data formats and converts them reliably and automatically according to pre-established rules. The software is dedicated to not only to the order data of the connected dealers, but also to the 1.6 million items of product data in the central database. Here prices, exploded views and instructions are stored in multiple languages. "This data is entered using Lobster_data at the various levels of our portal, where they are accessible to the dealers," said Werner. "When Bosch releases a new catalogue, we need to update 100,000 items, in different languages at a stroke."

Efficiency leads to customer loyalty

New for nexMart is the use of Lobster_data for invoice processing. As of January 2009 nexMart provides the entire invoice data output management including digital signature for the Berlin based client Inha. All invoices, whether by mail, fax or digital, are now handled using a single interface via nexMart. "Only special cases are still being looked after manually," says Goetz Roszinski, IT Manager of Inha GmbH. Nowadays Inha only has to tick a box in their ERP-system to invoke the invoicing process, "It is a very simple and straightforward process," comments Roszinski.

"The whole project to generate the first automatic invoice took just two weeks" says Roszinski. This was only possible due to the easy handling of Lobster_data. "In just seven steps using a graphical interface any data format can be transmitted to the desired target system," confirms Werner. Of added value was the dedicated support from Lobster's support team. The software company set up the system and provided technical support throughout the process. This ensured a perfect vendoruser-relationship.