

SAP Customer Success Story

"The greatest benefit that has been realized with the implementation of the SAP Enterprise Portal is that we now have better informed and knowledgeable CSRs who are able to fulfill the needs of the customer at the time of the call."

Reid Andrews, Director Information Technology



AT A GLANCE

Company Name

Brenntag Canada Inc.
www.brenntag.ca

Industry

Chemicals

Key Challenges

- Company required a way to unify all its key information and applications to give CSRs a single view to much needed information and the ability to perform in a real-time environment
- The task of processing an order from beginning to completion, including order entry, customer history check, stock availability, freight consolidation and pricing, was all performed manually
- With all the different permutations and combinations an order could have, it was impossible for CSRs to enter the order and deal effectively with the needs of the customer at the same time

Solution and Services

SAP Enterprise Portal, a component of SAP NetWeaver™

Implementation Highlights

- Summer of 2004 Brenntag Canada started an IT learning pilot with a small group of CSRs in Ontario, Canada
- Rolled out its SAP Enterprise Portal pilot in October 2004
- SAP Enterprise Portal implementation was seamless – result was an online order entry functionality making use of one portal screen with several embedded iViews
- SAP Enterprise Portal in production company-wide across the country by end of November 2004

Key Benefits

- SAP Enterprise Portal has aided in cutting order processing time down to less than five minutes
- More effective and knowledgeable CSRs who are able to fulfil the needs of the customer at the time of first engagement
- Improved customer service marks received by customer feedback loops
- CSRs now have readily available information, including a history of the customer, access to complete pricing catalogue, shipping information, freight information, outstanding orders etc.

SAP NETWEAVER™ TECHNOLOGY AND BRENNTAG CANADA WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THE CUSTOMER NUMBER ONE

Brenntag Canada, recognized as a leader in the Canadian chemical distribution industry, has long been committed to quality, outstanding service and responsible business practises. A member of the global Brenntag Holding GmbH group of companies, based in Germany, with over 100 years in the business, Brenntag Canada has become one of Canada's leading chemical distributors by offering customers a broad range of specialty and industrial chemicals from sites located across the country. Within this highly competitive industry segment of narrow margins and mature markets, Brenntag faces increasing pressures to achieve growth and maintain its dominant position.

Recognizing that the competitive business advantage goes to the organization that develops the most effective and successful partnership with their customers, Brenntag is one of the few companies in the distribution industry that provides complete supply chain management services. And, by offering a high level of value added services tailored to the requirements of the customer, Brenntag Canada is able to further differentiate itself from its competitors.



CUSTOMERS FIRST

The ongoing need to provide better quality service offerings and innovative customer solutions continues to have an impact on the potential growth of the company. Aligned with these priorities, Brenntag Canada recently established a company wide, process-driven and customer-focused initiative known as “Customers First”.

Recognizing that it is the customer that drives their business, “Customers First” has become the corporate brand that exemplifies a dedicated approach to achieving superior customer satisfaction and defined the business philosophy for the future. Employees from all levels in the organization are involved in this initiative in various project teams and/or levels of participation.

THE CHALLENGE

One of the major projects identified through the “Customers First” process dealt with processing customer orders. Brenntag’s Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) are the front line, dealing directly with the customers and processing an average of 500 invoices daily, the twenty-six (26) CSRs located across the country had the demanding job of getting the order right the first time and meeting customer needs all the time. But, the method of taking an order at Brenntag Canada was cumbersome and time consuming, thereby making it difficult for CSRs to always put the customer first.

CSRs were required to use a paper order form, a terribly inefficient method to accurately collect order information. Without a database or online customer history from which to draw information, CSRs lacked valuable information on customer profiles and ordering history. After collecting the specifics of the order, the CSR would be required to end the call, input order details and then call the customer back with the confirmation. There was no capability to respond to customer needs in real-time, and the tasks of checking stock availability, freight consolidation and pricing were all performed manually.

Reid Andrews, Director of Information Technology at Brenntag Canada states, “With all the different permutations and different combinations an order could have, it was impossible for CSRs to enter the order and deal with the needs of the customer at the same time”.

THE SAP® SOLUTION

Brenntag Canada needed a tool that would streamline the order entry process and allow the Customer Service Representative to be more engaged with the customer. They were looking for a solution that would facilitate immediate access to information so that CSRs could maximize their time on the phone with the customer developing a more effective and successful relationship.

As a long time SAP customer, Brenntag Canada knew exactly who to turn to for help with this issue. An end-to-end SAP shop since 1987, making use of mySAP™ ERP for their logistics, sales and distribution needs, Brenntag Canada approached SAP to find the functionality that they needed to address their order processing situation.

“For Brenntag to be successful with its Customers First initiative, the company required a way to unify all its key information and applications, to provide CSRs a single view to much needed information, and the ability to perform in a real-time environment with customers,” explains Ben Flauder, Customer Engagement Manager for SAP Canada Inc. “SAP Enterprise Portal, a component of SAP NetWeaver™, allowed Brenntag Canada to unify key information and applications across the enterprise and give CSRs the ability to take full advantage of their information resources when engaged on calls with customers.”

SAP ENTERPRISE PORTAL: A SINGLE VIEW OF INFORMATION FOR CSRs

In the summer of 2004, Brenntag Canada began building a “proof of concept” IT learning pilot, with a small group of CSRs in Ontario who perform service sales order functions for the company. Working with senior management and the sample group of CSRs, Brenntag’s technology team developed a custom portal that would address the bottlenecks in their order-taking situation.

Brenntag Canada’s commitment to the project was supported from the executive team through to the operational level of the CSRs who provided constant feedback on what they felt constituted an ideal order entry system. After some fine-tuning, the team rolled out its proof of concept in October 2004 to the Ontario CSR team. The result was an online order entry functionality making use of one portal screen with several embedded iViews.

iViews technology now allows Brenntag Canada CSRs to pull together up-to-the-minute information every time they engage a unique customer, accessing information from all available information sources such as the company's existing ERP system and related financial, warehouse and operations applications. These iViews, like volumes of encyclopaedias, contain multiple pages of data CSRs could access to complete any type of order.

After a short one-hour online training session, the CSRs were ready to put the online order entry system to a test. The implementation was seamless; Brenntag Canada is currently fine-tuning the SAP Enterprise Portal for even greater success.

"The objective was to develop a portal that would allow CSRs to utilize a single screen with background on the customer's account, purchase history, access additional product information, and introduce it to the customer at the time of the call. And, we have been successful in achieving all of that," says Reid Andrews.

THE BENEFITS

Although only in first stages of use at this time, SAP Enterprise Portal is meeting the potential Brenntag were looking for – an easier and more efficient order entry system. The fully customized and functional "Streamlined Order Entry" portal has already started paying dividends for the company.

"CSRs, within seconds, now have readily available information including a history of the customer, past purchases over the last twelve (12) months, access to a complete pricing catalogue, shipping information, freight information, outstanding orders – right at their finger tips," explains Reid Andrews.

The time-consuming process of using a paper and pencil to complete orders has been eliminated and the portal has reduced order-processing time to less than five minutes. Brenntag Canada CSRs now have more time to query customers on additional requirements, including using the newly designed "push buttons" to obtain suggestions on other products or services that would benefit the customer.

"The greatest benefit realised with the implementation of the portal is that we now have more knowledgeable CSRs, able to fulfil the needs of the customer at the time of the call," says Andrews. "And, at the end of the call, we now have a more satisfied customer who knows exactly what the order is going to be, when it will arrive and how much it will cost – all without us having to call them back."

Brenntag Canada is also realising a better ROI – 'return on information' – since implementing the pilot SAP Enterprise Portal. The portal users are using product and sales information to better advantage and providing superior service to the customer in the form of information tailored to their individual business needs.

SAP Enterprise Portal and SAP NetWeaver have provided Brenntag with the technology to respond to their customers in a more timely and effective manner; they are now better equipped at putting the customer first.

"The portal has demonstrated its efficiency and has provided absolute proof that a functional, customized online order entry system is achievable," says Andrews. "It has provided us with the scalability and performance that we have come to expect from SAP."

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