

Mittal Steel: Standardising document process operations, integrating with legacy applications



Mittal Steel is the world's largest international steel company. The company has grown significantly in the past several years as a result of several major acquisitions. With shares listed on the New York and Amsterdam stock exchanges, Mittal Steel owns steel-making facilities in 16 countries with a total of 224,000 employees. In the US alone, Mittal Steel has 14 different facilities in 12 states.

Mittal Steel produces a broad range of high-quality finished and semi-finished products for the flat and long products markets among automotive, engineering and appliance sectors. It encompasses all aspects of modern steelmaking, combining both integrated and mini-mill facilities and producing much of the iron ore and coking coal used in our furnaces. Mittal Steel is also one of the most advanced steel makers, operating a range of modern technologies.

www.mittalsteel.com

Steel Industry

Configuration

- ERP: SAP

Challenge: To standardise Mittal's document processing operations across all US facilities with an automatic document delivery platform that would be flexible enough to integrate with the company's varying legacy applications

As Mittal grew in size and location, IT experienced significant challenges in running its automated operations, specifically with regard to managing the order processing system.

"We were having issues processing orders as one cohesive unit. Although each facility was working under the Mittal name, at one point not too long ago, we were all fourteen different companies. As various mergers were completed, there was not yet a project to sync the order processing systems, in terms of the technology. Everyone had their own applications for processes we were all fulfilling, such as accounts payable, invoicing, and placing orders at the manufacturing facilities," said Moulesong.

Discussions between operations and IT were in agreement that there was a need to change. *"We needed to standardise the system – get everyone onto one single platform for email, faxing and scanning," said Moulesong. "It was an exciting initiative but a challenging one as well. For one, we knew searching for technology that would meet all of our requirements was going to be difficult; and second, we knew that our employees were going to be reluctant to changing the way they've been doing their jobs."*

Solution: Esker DeliveryWare

Moulesong and the IT team evaluated three vendors and ultimately decided to select Esker and its Esker DeliveryWare software solution.

"Esker DeliveryWare more than satisfied our immediate needs and also demonstrated more functionalities we may need down the road," said Moulesong. "The best thing Esker DeliveryWare offered was that its code could work with codes from 75% of the other products we had throughout our company. As a result, we were able to integrate those preprocessor codes from legacy applications. This technology change behind the scenes minimised the change directly experienced by our employees on the other end. Esker DeliveryWare accepts the document into its system just as they were formatted prior to implementation."

The first step to implementing Esker DeliveryWare was to eliminate RightFax. The team did this and created 75 Esker DeliveryWare rules to take over those functions. Then they shut down the servers being used in other locations to force all documents to be routed through one location in East Chicago, Indiana. For example, an employee in the Pennsylvania office still completed the same documentation but sent it through a printer queue to a central location in Indiana.

The second major part of the initiative was aimed at creating a mechanism to centralise the reception of all orders. Previously, all 14 facilities accepted steel orders over 42 different fax numbers. The potential for misplaced and/or incorrectly processed orders could lead to significant customer dissatisfaction, something Mittal Steel was keenly aware of.

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Bob Moulesong ▪ Mittal Steel

Support

Mittal's IT team has had no trouble with the software since it went live in 2005.

"Esker was on-site to help us install the software. We spent a total of two days on the infrastructure and then some time on rule development", said Moulesong. "Since then professional services has helped with adding more rules. But instead of just developing the rules for us, they make it a very interactive process. Step by step I've worked with them over WebEx to write the code. This approach has made future maintenance much more doable in house. When our users request a change, it is much easier for me to make it myself."

Benefits

With Esker DeliveryWare, the order processing team now needs just one incoming fax number for all the orders. Each comes in and gets captured by the software as a TIFF document, turned into a PDF and automatically sent to a virtual orders folder programmed to be checked every five minutes. Thereafter, the software sends the documents to the appropriate manufacturing facility to directly schedule the order for fulfillment by the steel mills.

"We operate a Just-in-Time inventory Schedule and this mechanism for placing orders helps make this process airtight," said Moulesong. "In addition, by wiping out fax numbers and fax machines, we have freed up resources and eliminated human error. There have been no failures since implementing Esker DeliveryWare."

Esker DeliveryWare has also allowed Mittal to operate with more flexibility to meet the needs of its customers.

"We sell to many 'mom and pop' shops that don't have sophisticated computers. Now we can send a transaction document via email and in turn they can receive it as a fax," added Moulesong.

Employees send approximately 800 – 1,000 faxes per day via email, as well as about 1000 emails, and receive about 200 pages of business document each day. With the addition of batch processing, the total number of transactions per day averages 6,000.

Looking ahead, the IT team wants to continue automating as many processes as possible. Specifically, they are looking closely at the Esker DeliveryWare Document Manager function as well as at changing the way in which purchase orders and accounts payable documents are handled.

Purchase orders are now sent through a third-party web application. IT sees new potential for savings by routing documents for delivery directly through Esker DeliveryWare. The IT team also sees the potential benefit of automatically sending invoices via scanned documents, postal mail or fax.

Summary of benefits

- Centralise production
- Improve JIT inventory schedule
- Eliminate redundancy
- Operational efficiency

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Bob Moulesong ■ Mittal Steel

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