



ArcelorMittal

Great relationships with customers

Lobster software proudly transmits data at ArcelorMittal

Screws, fish-hooks, paper clips and slide guitar strings all have one thing in common: they're all made out of steel. Whether stable or movable, springing or not, the world's largest steel company, ArcelorMittal, produces a wide variety of different steel grades. So that customers only receive exactly what they've ordered, Lobster_data, the data integration software from Lobster, transmits customer information electronically within their Hamburg facility.

ArcelorMittal's customers come from across the automotive and construction industries, as well as the packaging market, mechanical engineering and household appliance companies. Every industry and every customer need a different specific kind of steel. If the wrong type of steel is delivered, perhaps because an employee has entered data incorrectly on the system, high costs can be quickly incurred. In order to manage deliveries properly, all customers receive an electronic certificate of quality. This document contains a precise analysis of the chemical composition and other mechanical properties of the steel they're receiving. It also contains other information, including their address and the quantity being delivered. Lobster_data transmits all this data quickly and without error into the customer system.

Making two computers talk to save money every day

The Hamburg branch of ArcelorMittal upgraded a large part of their IT infrastructure around ten years ago. At the time, those responsible for the overhaul were considering how best to automate the process of providing customers with internal data on those all-important steel grades. It was clear that both sides had their own unique IT systems, but how could they be made to communicate with each other?

In the past, ArcelorMittal would send delivery notes out by email or in the post. Customers then had to enter the data into their own computer systems manually. "It took a long time and mistakes could easily slip through", explains Werner Köchle, Head of Commercial IT at ArcelorMittal Hamburg. To speed up the process, and to minimise the risk of error, the company reached an agreement with its customers on a common data format that both sides could read.

As a result, today, ArcelorMittal can also send its delivery notes in electronic format. They use Lobster_data to convert the necessary information into the agreed format, which customers can then automatically integrate into their own systems. "This ensures customers can read the right data and process it within their own systems", Werner explains.

Whether Excel, XML or PDF...

“Four years ago, we chose the Lobster system because the size of the program best fits our needs and the pricing model is very fair. Lobster_data can be extended, we can transfer our data in Excel or XML files and, at the same time, introduce different levels of security whenever we like”.

Converting to the Lobster_data system was handled by Lobster technicians, but whenever new customers need to be added, ArcelorMittal’s own IT staff are able to take care of the connections required. Even the customers gladly welcome the system: “we just tell them the structure of the formats and so far everyone has coped very well without any issues”, recalls Werner.

Working this way, both sides benefit from Lobster software and ArcelorMittal can maintain excellent relationships with its customers.

Company profile: ArcelorMittal is the world’s largest steel and mining company, operating in over 60 countries. The automotive, construction and packaging industries, as well as the consumer goods sector, form the company’s key customer base. The Group also operates and develops over 20 mines worldwide and is the world’s fourth largest iron ore producer. In 2012, ArcelorMittal’s sales reached \$84.2 billion with 88.2 million tons of crude steel produced, representing around six per cent of the world’s entire steel production. The company operates four major production sites in Germany, these include two integrated flat steel plants in Bremen and Eisenhüttenstadt, as well as two long steel plants in Hamburg and Duisburg. ArcelorMittal also maintains a strong distribution network in Germany with seven cutting service centres and 16 distribution centres. ArcelorMittal employs more than 8,000 people in Germany alone.