

Unified Messaging Solution that takes the biscuit

Griesson - de Beukelaer, the baked goods producer

The addition of Unified Messaging (UM) functionality such as fax and CTI to SAP systems is now optimising communications processes in companies and reducing effort and cost. The baked goods producer Griesson - de Beukelaer has been using OfficeMaster, Ferrari electronic's network-enabled UM solution, since 2008. This has enabled the company to consolidate its IT infrastructure across several company sites. Today, staff in the Purchasing or Finance departments, or the Laboratory, send more than 3,000 faxes per month directly to the SAP System, at a mouse click via OfficeMaster.

Griesson - de Beukelaer (GdB) dispatches around 600 tonnes of baked goods, ranging from its Prinzen Rolle to TUC biscuits to its Soft Cake world-wide, daily. The amount of ingredients used in the company's traditional plain and sweet bakeries is astounding: nine football pitches worth of eggs, flour weighing as much as a luxury cruise liner and a chain of chocolate bars that would stretch round the whole world. The company's staff process all the ordering of these ingredients, and packaging materials, via the SAP R/3-System which the company has implemented. As Christoph Baulig, System Administrator in the IT Infrastructure & Services department at GdB explains, the company uses enormous effort to bring its baked products to the customer. The entire production chain conceals highly complex communications processes. This is especially because the company has its headquarters at Polch and four other production sites in Kahla, Wurzen, Kempen and Ravensburg. When GdB decided to implement a Unified Messaging solution for SAP as well as for Microsoft Exchange 2007 it was with the aim of simplifying its processes and so to improve efficiency within the company.



Figure 1:
Griesson - de Beukelaer's Prinzen Rolle is the best-known sweet bakery in Germany (source: Griesson - de Beukelaer)

Central communications solution

Since the middle of August 2008 GdB, the baked goods producer, has been running the new network-enabled solution OfficeMaster for SAP/Exchange, supplied by Ferrari electronic AG, which is based in Berlin. This solution enables problem-free integration of Unified Messaging functionality such as fax, voicemail, SMS and CTI in Griesson - de Beukelaer's SAP/Exchange environment. A tailored combination of hardware and software components ensures that the telephone exchanges installed in each location can be connected to a central communications server via network-enabled external ISDN boxes, the OfficeMaster Gates. This central solution at the Polch headquarters made the individual communications servers at the other four production locations superfluous and so simplified administration activities. It also enables staff to send faxes directly from their PC workstation in an extremely convenient way. As fax traffic is digitised, media discontinuities are avoided and the communications partners get access to the necessary information more quickly.



Figure 2:
OfficeMaster Gate integrates the powerful Unified Messaging functionality in the SAP environment. (Source: Ferrari electronic AG).

Unified communication

Unified Messaging solutions integrate separate means of communication such as fax, SMS or e-mail in one uniform application environment. OfficeMaster is directly integrated in the SAP environment and enables users to send messages simply by pressing a button in the SAP Workflow. Users can simply glance at their Workplace to see whether, for example, a new order has been received by fax or they have received a message by SMS. This increases their availability and so speeds up all business processes in the company. OfficeMaster is being used across the board at Griesson - de Beukelaer for supply chain management: from procurement to logistics.

The solution, which is SAP-certified, works together with the SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SRM), Materials Management (MM) and Sales & Distribution (SD) modules. Around 500 users use OfficeMaster in the different working areas. The financial accountants use OfficeMaster to send payment instructions directly to the SAP-System, the buyers send purchase orders, and the sellers send offers.

Other staff also use the solution: in the Laboratory, for example, they send analyses, and in the Technical Department they send order spare parts.

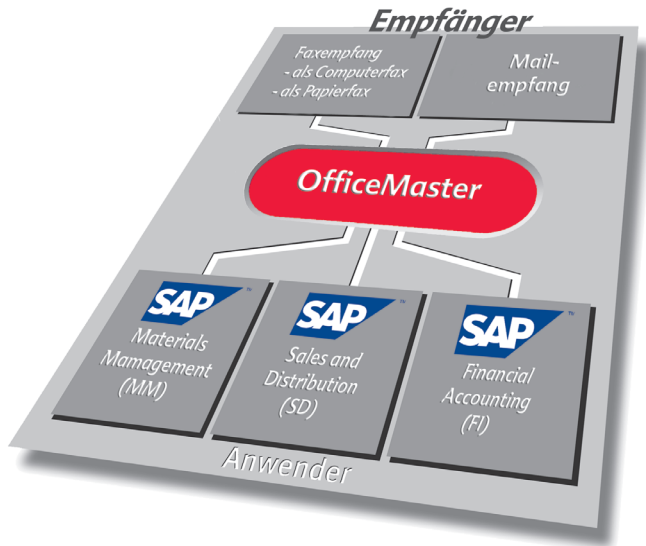


Figure 3:
 Using OfficeMaster, faxes and e-mails can be sent and received direct from the different modules in the SAP-System.
 (Source: Ferrari electronic AG)

Confirmed reception

Once a member of staff has created a document in the SAP-System, they can choose whether they want to print, fax or e-mail it. OfficeMaster returns a status message to the user to tell them the result of the communications activity. In the case of e-mail transmission this is simply a "transmission confirmation" similar to the one for the usual letter transmission. However, if a document is sent by fax, the sender receives a "confirmation of receipt" and consequently a legally binding fax transmission report in their SAP Workplace, since the fax reception report confirms that the fax has been sent properly. This corresponds to a letter that has to be signed for on delivery and is the reason why, today, GdB uses fax communication for preference, instead of e-mails which are more common today.

"We use digital fax transmission for all our ordering, from eggs, flour and chocolate up to packaging materials and plastic foil", explained Christoph Baulig. "For us it is especially important that ordering works, problem-free, and that we can monitor the communications processes end to end, without gaps." OfficeMaster enables users, for example, to track the status of a purchase order exactly and so get in touch with suppliers without delay if something is not delivered by the scheduled delivery deadline. "It would be fatal for us if production came to a stop because a raw material or the packaging wasn't available." The huge impact made by communications at Griesson - de Beukelaer becomes clear once you realise what is involved. Every month the staff send around 4000 faxes, 3000 from the SAP-System and the rest from other applications such as Microsoft Office or the company's warehouse management system.

Major savings in time and cost

By implementing OfficeMaster, Griesson - de Beukelaer was able to reduce the manual work steps in its communications processes. In the commercial area, in particular, there are many documents that need to be sent quickly, easily and reliably at the press of a button.

"However, the traditional method of sending a fax, including printing out the fax, walking to the fax machine, typing the number and waiting for confirmation of transmission and storing the document takes about five minutes", explained Christoff Wiethoff, Sales & Marketing Manager at Ferrari electronic AG. "Compared to that, sending a fax by computer saves a lot of time."

Once the user picks the numbers that are available in the SAP-System, the fax is sent directly from the SAP Workplace, and its confirmation of transmission is sent automatically – all in approximately 30 seconds. In addition, Griesson - de Beukelaer saves the costs of fax machines, printers, toner and paper. Emails, faxes and SMS messages are also made available central in a single system, which also makes it easier for the company to comply with the legal requirement to archive business documents electronically. "In the old days we had large amounts of paper, and printed and filed a lot, from orders to fax reports. I am glad to say that, nowadays, all that is unnecessary: we can track the complete communication process in the SAP-System without any difficulties", said Baulig. By means of the selected fax direct dial number, received faxes can also be assigned directly to an SAP user.

Infobox

The term "messaging" refers to services that run asynchronously. This means that the information sent by one person is not received in real time by the recipient. This process involves the following steps:

- The sender sends the message
- The recipient receives it
- The recipient then reads the contents

Features of Unified Messaging

- central message inbox for all services ("Unified Inbox")
- flexible query and control of the message flow („Unified Access“)
- central storage for all messages ("Unified Message Store")
- central administration for all services ("Unified Administration")

The term Unified Communications is used to describe the integration of asynchronous message exchange (messaging) and real time communications, such as CTI, video conferences or Instant Messaging.

Simplified administration

For GdB, it should be remembered that OfficeMaster is not only making work easier for the end-users, but also for the administrators. GdB now has a central communications solution at its Polch headquarters and can now save the costs associated with the individual servers at each other site, and also the administrative effort there. In the past, a fax server was installed at each site. Today, OfficeMaster Gate, supplied by Ferrari electronic, is responsible for connecting to the telephone exchanges. "Nowadays we don't need five communications servers any more, just one shared server for SAP and Outlook and an Exchange server. Administration is now simplified as it all takes place on one site", said Baulig, who is the IT manager. The Administrators can now access the solution via the Messaging Server configuration and, for example, redirect faxes without difficulty if necessary. The connection is based on the SAPconnect base interface, which the individual SAP modules use for external communication by fax, SMS and Internet mail. In it the Administrator is given an overview of all Send jobs and their status. By implementing OfficeMaster Gate, the company avoided the need to make changes to hardware in the server. OfficeMaster Gate is used across the corporate network to provide several site with fax functionality, locally.

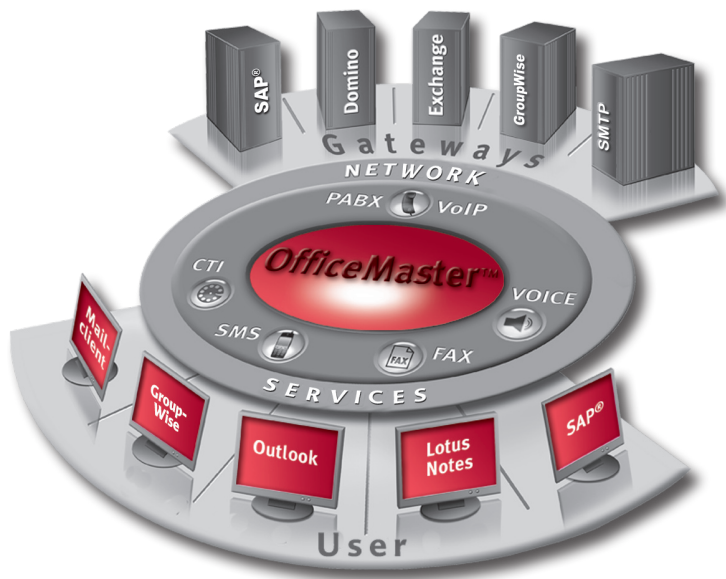


Figure 4:
 Ferrari electronic's Unified Communications solution can be integrated in all leading IT infrastructures (source: Ferrari electronic AG).

Ready for the future

The use of this innovative solution is not only already bringing many benefits today, but is also opening the doors for other applications in the world of Unified Communications. Griesson - de Beukelaer now plans to start using Microsoft's Office Communications Server and work with the SIP protocol.

"For example, this will enable us to carry out round table conferences in which we simply hold meetings in a 360 degree video conference, instead of driving several hours to attend a meeting. That would save us time and money".

Once again, GdB will be able to rely on its partner of many years, Ferrari electronic: the OfficeMaster Gate not only works as a professional ISDN controller for OfficeMaster for SAP, but it is a Microsoft-certified media gateway that also links the traditional IT world with the IP-based Microsoft platforms Office Communications Server 2007 R1/R2 and Exchange Server 2007.

"By implementing OfficeMaster we have become more productive and the quality of our communication has improved, as it is now easier to keep an overview of it, and access it, and it is better integrated in the workflow", Christoph Baulig summed up.

Ferrari electronic AG

At the end of the 1980s, this Berlin-based company, with its headquarters in Teltow, developed the first intelligent fax card to be used in Germany. Today, with more than 20,000 implemented solutions, it is one of the leading manufacturers of Unified Communications solutions for all commonly-used mail systems. Working together with its sales partners throughout Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Poland, Ferrari electronic has proven itself as an expert and reliable contact partner for communications solutions. Ferrari electronic's OfficeMaster product suite includes fax server (computer fax), SMS Gateway, voicemail (digital answering machine with remote pickup) and CTI (Computer Telephone Integration). All major mail interfaces, such as Microsoft Exchange Server, Lotus Notes/Domino Server, Open-Xchange and Novell GroupWise can be used as communications platforms. Certified connections to SAP® and Dynamics NAV also form part of the portfolio as electronic signature solutions. Every solution can also be integrated in VoIP environments. Ferrari electronic has been registered as a limited company since 1998.

Our list of reference customers includes well-known and reputable customers from all sectors of industry, such as the Axel Springer publishing house, ADAC, First Data Deutschland, Thyssen, Quelle and the DANZAS holding company.

Griesson – de Beukelaer

Griesson - de Beukelaer is one of Europe's top producers of sweet and savoury baked goods. In Germany it has production centers in Polch (Rhineland-Palatinate), Kempen (North Rhine-Westphalia), Kahla (Thuringia), Ravensburg (Baden-Württemberg) and Wurzen (Saxony). GdB has a workforce of 2,000 and, in 2008, achieved total sales revenues of Euro 481 million.

GdB's product range includes well-known brands such as De Beukelaer, Griesson, Prinzen, GLEICH&CROSS, Tekrum, Café Musica, TUC, Mikado, Wurzen and, under license, Mövenpick.