SAP COMMUNICATES WITH SURROUNDING SYSTEMS VIA FIS/XEE

Standardized EDI data exchange and connection of a host-based legacy system via a central integration system

HÄFELE

Customer

- Häfele GmbH & Co KG
- Founding year: 1923
- Headquarters: Nagold
- Employees: more than 6,000

Industry

- Furniture/construction industry

Key Figures

- SAP ERP ECC 6.0
- Customers: 160.000
- Subsidiaries: 37
- Affiliated subsidiaries: 15 (dated 2013)

Challenge

Following the replacement of local ERP solutions in various countries by SAP, Häfele GmbH & Co KG was faced with the challenge of exchanging data between the legacy system and the new ERP solution. The task was to integrate the company's heterogeneous system landscape as well as external business partners and to enable EDI communication between SAP and these partners.

Solution

- *FIS*/xee – B2B solution

Benefits

FIS/xee provides all required EDI formats for data traffic. The EAI server by FIS supports integration and communication and merges internal systems and business partner relationships.

At Häfele, the leading international manufacturer of furniture and construction fittings, FIS began implementing SAP logistics modules in 2008. This was preceded by a joint international project to implement SAP for accounting in 2003. The new SAP ERP system will replace the previous host-based software. For this reason, Häfele gradually rolled out the new system in 15 European subsidiaries. In order to continue to guarantee the high level of data integrity between the host system and SAP, Häfele opted for a central data hub - the *FIS*/xee product from FIS. In addition, the SAP system must be able to handle EDI communication with external partners. The company organizes both with the *FIS*/xee EAI solution, after initially experimenting with various products from other manufacturers.

"The advantage of FIS/xee is that you have all functionalities in one system. We particularly liked the clarity and, as a consequence, the ease of use."

Wilfried Mast,
head of application management

The challenge Häfele faced when transitioning to SAP was integrating different system landscapes with different levels of depth within the company. In addition, external business partners had to be connected. Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) is the keyword here. Behind the heterogeneous system landscape are the mainframe computer of the previous ERP application and other legacy systems. For a long time, Häfele operated the EDI communication of the host-based legacy system with the system of a well-known business integration provider. With the start of the SAP implementation, the IT landscape began to move because the task now was to create additional connections from the host to SAP and to technologically renew the outdated EDI solution.

As a result, the company has relied on *FIS*/xee, the EAI server from FIS, to connect various systems since the beginning of 2011. It supports Häfele in the various integration and communication tasks and brings internal system landscapes and business partner relationships together quickly, securely and efficiently via its flexible platform.

Clear monitoring

"The advantage of *FIS*/xee is that all functionalities can be found in one system," says Wilfried Mast, Head of Application Management at Häfele. "We particularly liked the clarity and the ease of use in the SAP interface as well as the high level of integrity in SAP." The Häfele employees got familiar with the transactions of the *FIS*/xee integration system straight away and with little training effort. Monitoring, administration and configuration via SAP transactions make *FIS*/xee easy to use.

In other systems, users sometimes have to call several applications in parallel in order to view incoming and outgoing messages and solve problems. In *FIS*/xee, a mouse-click is all you need. This is an invaluable advantage because it can be used in several time zones.

Data retention in SAP

FIS/xee users at Häfele can directly access the "payload", i.e. the user data, by using the transmission log. In addition, the mappings can be called from the SAP database and adapted in the FIS Workbench from here. "The FIS Workbench is characterized by its ability to react quickly and solve complex problems," says Günter Reichardt, responsible for EDI communication. "The FIS Workbench can be used to implement all formats starting with the standard EDI or B2B messages via EDIFACT, XML or CSV up to individual formats."

Host system is replaced step by step

In day-to-day business, the host and the SAP system exchange master and transaction data at Häfele. The nightly host jobs deliver bills of material, material data and purchase orders to *FIS*/xee. *FIS*/xee then transmits them to the central SAP system, which is centrally located in Nagold, Germany, for all countries. The amount of data is decreasing almost monthly as Häfele is gradually changing over its international subsidiaries to SAP. Until the current host system is finally replaced, however, SAP must continue to import and process master data from the host.

If the data distributed internally with *FIS*/xee becomes less and less, the EAI interface for the EDI data transfer with external partners is increasingly used. Häfele mainly uses Telebox X.400 for EDI data exchange. The *FIS*/xee system collects the data there and converts it into SAP IDoc and into the format to be processed by the host. Of course, *FIS*/xee provides standard data exchange methods such as Telebox X.400, OFTP, FTP(s), SFTP, http(s) and e-mail. Furthermore, it is possible to exchange messages via EDIINT AS2, Web service and database.

Häfele, the leading international manufacturer of furniture and construction fittings

Active interface monitoring

For Günter Reichardt, another important function of the FIS integration system is the active interface monitoring. In case of defined events, an e-mail with all required information is sent automatically. As a result, manual monitoring is no longer necessary. „This allows our IT administration to react even faster to problems and consequently ensure smooth partner communication," says Günter Reichardt.

Automated business processes

Until June 2013, 15 international subsidiaries had been connected to the host via *FIS*/xee on the central SAP system. Many of these subsidiaries, such as Australia or Mexico, use the FIS EAI solution to implement their B2B requirements - with a strong upward trend. A special interface for Mexico (CFD - Comprobantes Fiscales Digitales), for instance, was implemented in the first half of 2013. Furthermore, EDI partners were connected to the SAP system via *FIS*/xee for Häfele Australia. You can now electronically map the complete "ORDER-TO-CASH" process with your customers. FIS supported the IT teams on site with training courses so that they could independently integrate external business partners into their system in the future.

"The know-how transfer in the area of *FIS*/xee was important to Häfele for two reasons," says Wilfried Mast. "On the one hand, our colleagues in Australia and New Zealand can react quickly despite the time difference. On the other hand, EDI is one of the core competencies of the IT team, which we would like to keep in-house."

Minifix - a HÄFELE patent

"To us, an important function of the EDI converter by FIS GmbH is the active interface monitoring. As a result, we can inform our EDI partners immediately on an unprocessed transmission. This enables our IT department to react even faster to errors."

Günter Reichardt,
Communication manager

EAI system integrated in SAP

"In summary, the successful integration of the *FIS*/xee system in SAP has made the changeover very easy for our employees," says Wilfried Mast. "All important actions can be completely executed via SAP".

SAP transactions are used for monitoring, configuration and administration. The user is therefore in their familiar environment. Data and converter settings are saved directly in the SAP system so that no additional data backup or archiving is required.

System administration and monitoring are directly integrated in the SAP system and are called via SAP transactions. The *FIS*/xee transmission log clearly displays the message traffic and offers the possibility to design the view dynamically and individually. Consequently, a global company like Häfele can implement B2B connections completely in SAP by using a central architecture.

HÄFELE

Häfele GmbH & Co KG

Since its beginnings in the 1920s, Häfele has developed into one of the leading international companies in the fittings industry. Meanwhile, over 6,000 employees contribute their share to the company's success, a large part of the turnover is generated abroad. Due to its individual product development and the functionality concept, Häfele is able to further extend its lead over the competition. The company has ten sales offices in Germany, 37 subsidiaries abroad and its own representative office in 11 other countries.

FIS Informationssysteme und Consulting GmbH

FIS Informationssysteme und Consulting GmbH is an expanding, independent company and forms the umbrella of the FIS Group. Within this group, more than 800 employees work to make companies more modern, more economical and more competitive every day. The focus of FIS is on SAP projects and the development of efficient solutions that drive digitalization in companies. As one of the leading SAP system houses in the D-A-CH region, FIS is the market leader in technical wholesale with its complete solution FIS/wws. Together with its subsidiary Medienwerft, FIS covers the complete SAP range of topics for the Customer Experience (CX) area.

In the subsidiary FIS-ASP, more than 100 specialists operate and administer customers' SAP systems in their own data centers in southern Germany. The subsidiary FIS-SST is a competent partner for nearshoring projects. Collaborative solutions for the convenient and secure process handling of different companies on common platforms are developed at the subsidiary FIS-iLog.

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