

CASE STUDY

SCA VPSX[®] solution ensures efficient delivery of critical documents

A large international manufacturer needed a solution to provide fast, reliable printing of business-critical documents. By implementing the VPSX[®] output management solution, the company improved their shipping processes, avoided service-level related penalties, and increased the overall efficiency of their vast SAP printing environment.



ORGANIZATION

SCA is a global consumer goods and paper company that develops, produces and markets personal care products, tissue, packaging solutions, publication papers and solid-wood products. SCA creates value through knowledge of the needs of consumers and customers, regional presence and efficient production.

Sales are carried out in some 90 countries and production in about 40 countries. Net sales amount to more than SEK 96 billion (€11 billion) annually. At the beginning of 2006,

SCA had around 50,000 employees. SCA shares are traded on the Stockholm, London, and New York stock exchanges.

With thousands of SAP users in their worldwide network, SCA has fully integrated CRM, Collaboration, Business Warehouse, and other SAP modules into its vital business processes. Since 1999, the IT group at SCA has sought to leverage the power of its SAP-based systems across the enterprise – from the paper mill to the factory floor, shipping dock, and corporate boardroom.

PRINTER JAMS = TRAFFIC JAMS

Many of the business processes at SCA rely on documents. Sivert Stääf, Printing and Interface Technician at SCA, explains: "Our systems are fully integrated with those of our customers. For example, when a customer orders a shipment of products for one of their stores, we receive an inbound EDI call telling us what, where, and when the customer needs us to deliver."

These inbound EDI messages are only the first links in the supply chain. "Our

SAP systems identify the warehouse with the given products and print out an order ticket," says Stääf. "With a limited number of loading docks at each warehouse, timing is very important. Shipping staff need to process orders efficiently to avoid delays at the dock. If there is congestion getting trucks into and out of the warehouse, then local traffic gets backed up – causing problems with the local police."

BOTTOM LINE IMPACT OF PRINTING

Shipping delays not only influence relations with the law enforcement community; they can also affect the bottom line. "Many of our customer agreements contractually obligate SCA to deliver goods within a specified time period," explains Stääf. "Tough service level agreements are a growing reality throughout the consumer products sector."

To meet the terms of these agreements, all of SCA's systems need to work in perfect harmony. Printing is an especially important element of success,

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A large international paper goods producer dramatically improved shipping and distribution processes with software from LRS[®]. The VPSX solution helps the company save money and achieve ever higher levels of service.



VPSX SOFTWARE IN ACTION

Installed while the product was still in the beta testing phase, the VPSX solution boasted functionality far beyond that of the previous UNIX output management system. For example, paper jams and other physical printer problems sometimes kept users from receiving their SAP output. However, the VPSX spool retained a copy of each document, enabling administrators and users to view the documents via a web browser, then re-route the output to an alternate device.

Now running in production, the VPSX solution facilitates real-time feedback on the status of more than 10,000 SAP print requests per day. Says Sivert: "Users can tell whether their report had been printed, even without leaving the SAP application." With its SAP-certified interface to the application server, the VPSX solution provides seamless communication all the way from the originating application to the end user's printer. Thus, if a printer runs out of paper before the user's output has been printed, the VPSX system can send a message to the SAP application, retain the output, and resume printing once someone adds paper to the printer.

The ability to identify, notify, and recover from printing errors helps SCA provide timely delivery of products to its customers.

as it affects so many work processes. From pick lists to shipping labels, dispatch sheets, and delivery instructions; printed documents are the key to many business processes.

SCA needed a system that could ensure timely, reliable delivery of all the company's critical documents. Moreover, the system needed to help SCA staff identify and solve printing problems before they could negatively affect critical business processes.

THE EVOLUTION OF AN OUTPUT SOLUTION

Like many SAP customers, SCA had written their own LPD server to handle SAP output. "This approach worked at first, but as more and more users started calling the help desk to locate their output, we could see that this was not an ideal solution," says Sivert Stäaf. In addition to basic print management, SCA also needed a simple way to add electronic formatting to SAP documents without burdening technical staff.

The SCA team knew that they needed to take a strategic approach to output management. "We looked at everything from shareware to some very expensive solutions offered by major printer manufacturers," says Sivert. "In the end, we chose to evaluate a new product from LRS."

At around this time, Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. (LRS) was announcing the development of a UNIX-based output management package. The new VPSX solution was designed to support advanced printing protocols, enabling the VPSX system to communicate directly with printers and provide page-by-page confirmation of print jobs. The system included a web-based control interface to help administrators identify printers with low paper, low toner, and other problems before these caused a delay in printing.

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