

Complex document output made simple for Akzo Nobel Decorative Coatings

Fact File

The Challenge:

Enhancing complex, high-volume SAP output to streamline printing, automate processes and support local brand requirements.

StreamServe ROI:

- Improved SAP document formatting without additional SAP programming effort
- Centralized control of documents with customized local delivery supports multiple brands and languages
- More efficient e-procurement with automated print and archiving processes
- Ease of adding new documents supports changing business requirements
- Reduced network load thanks to support for native print formats.

StreamServe BCP enhances SAP output to support brand identities in multiple countries

Akzo Nobel is a world leader in pharmaceuticals, coatings and chemicals, and the group's Decorative Coatings business provides a huge range of paints, varnishes and other products. These include many products that will be familiar to DIY fanatics and professional decorators all over the world.

Akzo Nobel Decorative Coatings has built its success on innovative products, strong brands, quality service and an efficient infrastructure. With a vast network of customers and suppliers, Akzo Nobel generates a large volume of invoices, labels and other business documents. This was the focus for a business communication project designed to improve the company's control over the documents that are output from its business applications.

The Challenge

Akzo Nobel runs its business with the help of SAP® software implemented across subsidiaries in 11 European countries. In particular, SAP supports the company's e-procurement processes.

"Our SAP e-procurement solution has played a big part in making purchasing processes more efficient and cost-effective," said Paul Grundmeijer, Business Unit Information Manager at Akzo Nobel Decorative Coatings Europe. "However, we had to find a way to manage the business documents that are output by SAP more effectively."

That is because branding the output from SAP was a significant challenge for the company. Akzo Nobel issues 15,000 invoices each week – some 780,000 a year – as well as a huge volume of labels, shipping notes and other documents. Each of its operating countries uses different brand identities and logos. Akzo Nobel needed a way to print invoices and labels locally that included the right brand identity for each country.

"It was possible to achieve this with additional SAP programming effort," continues Paul Grundmeijer, "but we needed a faster, simpler and more cost-effective solution."

Akzo Nobel's SAP solution offered basic output options, which included a limited range of print formats and formatting capabilities. These had to be enhanced to support its branding goals across a complex communication mix.

Archiving posed another challenge. Preserving an audit trail for multiple documents in a high-volume environment required a business communication solution that could connect SAP seamlessly with archiving systems. Finally, Akzo Nobel needed a solution to these challenges that would not require additional investment in network capacity. With high document volumes and operations across the world, the solution had to be as efficient as possible.

“ Our documents flow automatically to printing and then archiving. This saves us and our users a great deal of time. ”



About StreamServe

StreamServe Inc. is a leader and innovator in the fast-growing Enterprise Business Communication (EBC) market, with over 4,000 customers worldwide. We are the only organization to provide an independent platform for the two-way exchange of critical business information in any channel or format. Our pioneering approach enables companies to reduce the cost of communicating with their customers, suppliers and employees. It also increases the ROI from enterprise business applications and makes all of their printed and electronic output more personalized and customer-focused.

StreamServe was founded in Sweden in 1995. Today, our solution is distributed and supported in 130 countries. StreamServe alliances include major application vendors, systems integrators and e-business providers such as IBM, SAP and Oracle.

“We can support different brand names in each country, and it's easy to switch from one to another.”

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The Solution

Akzo Nobel found a versatile and effective business communication solution in the StreamServe Business Communication Platform™ (BCP). StreamServe BCP adds significant value to SAP implementations by dramatically increasing the control over the look, feel and format of printed output – as well as by enabling SAP users to output documents in faster, more cost-effective electronic formats such as PDF and email.

“Now we use StreamServe BCP to create a single output file, centrally,” said Chris Breeschoten, IT Infrastructure Officer for Akzo Nobel. “We then outsource that file to TPG Post, which prints the invoices. These are standard invoices that are sent out with the Akzo Nobel name and logo. On the box labels, we include a brand logo and these are also recorded in StreamServe BCP. As a result it's simple to print labels with various brand logos, as required.”

StreamServe BCP achieves this by automatically formatting documents with the correct look and feel according to the data they contain. Instead of the complexity of multiple output streams for each type of invoice, Akzo Nobel can generate a single output file that's ready to print and far easier to manage.

StreamServe BCP's flexibility also gives the company various options for digital archiving of business documents. Akzo Nobel uses the StreamServe solution in combination with the IXOS archiving system. StreamServe BCP handles document layout and sends it to the printer in a print format for regular distribution, and at the same time, the same document is sent to IXOS as a PDF file, where it is stored. Implementing IXOS with the StreamServe solution was straightforward.

“The software packages tied in with each other seamlessly,” explains Breeschoten. “Our documents flow automatically to printing and then archiving. This saves us and our users a great deal of time.”

The Results

“With StreamServe BCP, we can print out sales documents locally in every country in Europe,” says Breeschoten. “We can support different brand names in each country, and it's easy to switch from one to another. We can add new types of document to StreamServe BCP and make them available locally without difficulty.”

At present, a total of around fifty different documents are available via the StreamServe solution, in Dutch, German and English, and soon in French.

Akzo Nobel was also pleasantly surprised about the low network load imposed by StreamServe BCP, as Grundmeijer explained: “Per user, the network load is no more than 1k, which is very low. We would probably never have achieved this with an alternative solution. That is because the StreamServe solution does not use Windows printer drivers, but instead creates files directly in the relevant printer language. These files are only a fraction of the size of the Windows printer files, and this reduces the network load.”

With the StreamServe Business Communication Platform, Akzo Nobel Decorative Coatings has made complex SAP output easier and more cost-effective to manage. StreamServe BCP supports the company's branding goals and is a key link in the Akzo Nobel's continued success as a market leader.



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