

Transportation



Verbrugge

Quote

Seven years ago Verbrugge started using a TOPCALL Communication Server. "In those days, we sent out so many Faxes and Telex messages, that the quality of the information stream came into play because of the manual processing," comments Verstraeten. When discussing competitive products he goes on to say, "Many of the then competitive products that were also considered have now disappeared from the market completely. The TOPCALL Communication Server was installed, and in all these years it has not gone down even once."

The Dutch seaport of Terneuzen is a niche player, and this specialization makes it possible to compete with the nearby harbours at Rotterdam and Antwerp. Transportation company Verbrugge International, a major Dutch transport company, is one of these specialists. It owns the second largest terminal in Europe for forest products and provides an important shipping destination for the paper industry. The company handles enormous quantities of wood and wood pulp... and the odds are that the paper on which this article is printed has seen Verbrugge in Terneuzen at some stage or another, even if you live in the UK or Italy.

Challenge

Transportation companies are very communication intensive. Every physical move comes with an administrative information stream. If this information line fails, so does the transport. Without communication, nothing moves. Verbrugge International is a conglomerate of business units: harbour, transportation and environment, plus a service business for DAF Trucks, BMW and Daihatsu family cars, waste disposal companies, and many others.

The combination of these different activities also has an impact on Information Technology. In the transportation sector, and especially in the larger companies, EDI plays an important role. Standard EDI messages are sent to business partners via a (General Electric) VAN. "We want the entire communication process to be transparent to the user," says Verstraeten. "For the user, it shouldn't make any difference whether an order is sent as an EDI message, a Fax, or as an e-mail message. The user isn't interested in the medium."

Solution

Verbrugge has connected its Lotus Notes implementation to a TOPCALL Communication Server to handle the company's Fax, Telex and e-mail traffic. TOPCALL now offers Verbrugge a single solution for all of their messaging needs and Lotus Notes users can conduct all of their messaging through a single user.

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"For Verbrugge it was important once we decided to use Lotus Notes and contacted TOPCALL, they already had the linking product available. It was also important that TOPCALL had proven its capabilities with other organisations. In no way was TOPCALL a restrictive factor," says Verstraeten.

"We like to use technology that has already proven its qualities in the field," says Verstraeten. "... when it comes to spearhead technology, such as the communication process, we go for state-of-the-art products, as this relates to a field. That is of great importance for our company."

Solution with Lotus Notes

Verbrugge selected Lotus Notes for use throughout the company. Says Dominique Neve, "Initially, we were only looking for a mail program for our PC networks. But we soon realised the future integration of Notes and AS/400 databases would offer a very important advantage. Also, because IBM is completely backing up Lotus Notes, it became very clear for us that Lotus would be the way to go." To be able to send Faxes from Lotus Notes via the TOPCALL Communication Server without any problems, a link needed to be made. As Guido Meulendijks of TOPCALL explains, "Such a link seems to be very simple, and the user doesn't even know it's there. But, however invisible TC/Link-LN is to the user, technically it is a very complex product that has a major impact on Lotus Notes."

TC/Link-LN was developed by the TOPCALL R&D department at the company's headquarters in Austria. "For Verbrugge it was important once we decided to use Lotus Notes and contacted TOPCALL, they already had the linking product available. It was also important that TOPCALL had proven its capabilities with other organisations. In no way was TOPCALL a restrictive factor," says Verstraeten. "It's a good product and users don't even know that it's there." Lotus Notes will be the central communication platform for Verbrugge with one central inbox and outbox for every user. The system automatically determines, by means of a single directory, whether the message was sent as e-mail, Fax or EDI via a VAN or the Internet, so the user doesn't have to take any action. This way, outgoing and incoming communications, which are essential for every transportation company, can be integrated.

Result

Verbrugge users receive all of their messages, Fax, Telex and Internet mail in the integrated inbox of the Lotus Notes client. Verbrugge uses TOPCALL for all of its open communications traffic: Fax, Telex and Internet mail. Users can address to all recipients in the Notes directory and send through the TOPCALL communication system. Verbrugge has chosen to bet its communication strategy on Lotus Notes and TOPCALL.