

MacDermid Enthone optimises international customs management



By introducing AEB's ASSIST4 Customs Integration at its industrial facilities in the Netherlands, MacDermid Enthone largely automated and streamlined the process of clearing exports through customs. The IT department sees many clear benefits.

MacDermid Enthone is a market leader in the production of environmentally friendly surface coatings, serving customers in the automotive, aerospace, oil and gas, and consumer electronics industries. In Europe alone, MacDermid Enthone has manufacturing facilities in five countries that export its specialised chemicals to a global customer base counting on fast, on-time delivery and an efficient, reliable supply chain.

Physical shipping processes are best supported by a standardised IT infrastructure. And with a standardised ERP system from JD Edwards and AEB's ASSIST4 Transport & Freight Management solution deployed at several sites, MacDermid Enthone had already made great strides toward standardisation – except for the software used to manage export customs. But MacDermid Enthone recently passed a milestone here as well when it introduced ASSIST4 Customs Integration.

'ASSIST4 Customs Integration allows us to respond quickly to new challenges. When we want to augment our exports with new destination countries or products, for example. The solution gives us freedom

and independence in how we work,' says Project Manager Patricia Zutz, tasked with implementing the new customs solution at MacDermid Enthone.

Many details of what customs authorities require from businesses vary by country, even within the European Union. This means you can never just assume that an IT provider knows how to manage customs in multiple countries. 'That's why we were so pleased that AEB was able to offer us a multi-country solution,' adds Patricia Zutz. The logistics professionals were a bit more sceptical, but they were won over as the project unfolded.

No changes to ERP system required

The project was launched in October 2015, and by March 2016, MacDermid Enthone went live with ASSIST4 Customs Integration – without having to adapt its ERP system in any way. 'We still transfer the shipping data from the ERP system to ASSIST4 Transport & Freight Management,' explains Dirk Zutz, Technical Manager responsible for the ERP system at MacDermid Enthone and for integrating the freight and customs solution throughout Europe.

ASSIST4 Customs Integration is fully integrated with ASSIST4 Transport & Freight Management. 'That made our job a lot easier, of course,' notes Robin Kaufmann, who headed the project for AEB. But even if this had not been the case, it still would have been okay. 'Because ASSIST4 Customs Integration can easily be integrated with all business systems such as Microsoft Dynamics, proAlpha, IFS, and Infor. We even offer a standardised plug-in for SAP®-based systems,' Uwe Henning, International Business Development Director at AEB, emphasises.

High-level automation

'Thanks to ASSIST4 Customs Integration, we're enjoying high-level automation for all our export processes in the Netherlands,'

says Patricia Zutz. A look at the process chain for export shipments explains why:

Incoming orders are captured in the ERP system, including the shipping address, shipping date, and the pick date that is calculated from that data. When the orders are due, the ERP system generates a delivery note and the customs calculation needed for export, then transmits these documents to the transport management system.

ASSIST4 Transport & Freight Management uses data imported from the ERP system to generate other important documents such as the CMR shipping note and accompanying documents for dangerous goods. In the case of export shipments, ASSIST4 Customs Integration is also involved. The system receives the necessary data from ASSIST4 Transport & Freight Management, fills in the missing data, generates an export declaration for customs, and then automatically checks to make sure it's complete and plausible. Templates and shipment profiles are used so that data from recurring export transactions can be automatically completed.

Both users and IT experts at MacDermid Enthone are very pleased. 'Our new customs solution is fast and easy to use,' enthuses Ruud de Bresser from the logistics department. Patricia Zutz appreciates that the system can be easily adapted to new requirements. 'We can define our own text modules, which allows us to work more freely and independently,' she adds.

IT specialist Dirk Zutz also found what he was looking for: IT solutions for shipping and customs management from a single source – with clearly delineated responsibilities and easy for his company to maintain and manage.

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