

Seamless Documentation Adds Value and Minimizes Risk

MAN Nutzfahrzeuge Creates Electronic Vehicle Document Using Livelink ECM™ Solutions from Open Text

With approximately 34,000 employees and annual sales of EUR 8.7 billion (2006), MAN Nutzfahrzeuge is a leading international provider of commercial vehicles and transport solutions. They chose a Livelink ECM infrastructure based on Open Text solutions to create the seamless and efficient electronic vehicle document project. Today, this development provides complete documentation for the whole lifecycle of the 87,000 plus commercial vehicles produced through MAN Nutzfahrzeuge each year, and minimizes the risk of product liability. Electronic documents allow the company to optimize their high added value key business processes—such as production or warranties.

MAN Nutzfahrzeuge recognized their need for seamless documentation at various individual stages throughout the process chain. The benefit of transparent documentation and careful archiving is clear when you consider the legal obligations of product liability, which require documents to be retained for 15 years. Take for instance claims made over the correct manufacturing of a vehicle according to the order particulars, complex production at various sites, or warranty claims made several years after the vehicle was purchased. All of these claims are resolved using existing data and production records. This can require considerable time, effort and money.

However, it all pays off. For example, it would be possible to prove that a broken axle was not the result of a material fault, but rather due to material fatigue caused by overloading on the part of the vehicle owner. Similarly, it may be that a truck is used by the owner to transport liquids and therefore requires structural changes, even though it was originally produced for other loads. If damage occurs under any of these circumstances, the question is raised as to who is responsible for the cost. When personal injury comes into play, a lack of documented proof from the manufacturer can quickly lead to sky-high damage claims.

“The corporate processes of MAN Nutzfahrzeuge are supported by a wide range of IT systems—host systems for order processing and production management, several SAP modules and databases, etc. In addition to the large amount of master data that is created and amended in various systems throughout the whole process, there are the many process-related paper documents that provide essential support for processes—each vehicle has a file and there are more than 87,000 of these vehicles each year,” explains Sebastian Rottenwöhler, project manager of electronic vehicle documents at MAN IT Services GmbH, the Group’s own IT service provider. “A central ECM infrastructure for all data and documents is therefore a basic requirement for unlocking further added value potential. It was from this understanding that the electronic vehicle document project was born.”

Business and IT Working Hand in Hand

Before implementing Livelink ECM, MAN IT communicated with specialist departments to find out what their needs were. It quickly became apparent that the interests and goals of different departments could be met with a single infrastructure solution—and without any media disruptions or redundancies. “Just two weeks after we told our colleagues in the warranty department about the idea for a central ECM infrastructure and its possibilities, they sent us the following project request: connection to the electronic vehicle documents,” says Petra Sedlmeier, sub-project manager for after sales, MAN IT Services. “In fact, our colleagues, led by Richard Walter, became the driving force behind the project. Without their process expertise, it would have taken much longer for the project to succeed. This is a great example of what is possible when business and IT work hand in hand.”

The potential that a company-wide Livelink ECM infrastructure would bring to MAN Nutzfahrzeuge was quickly realized across all specialist departments. For example, in production electronic records would mean less media disruptions; while in order processing the solution would improve efficiency and quality in the sales process, which was their top priority.

With the electronic vehicle document platform, we are one decisive step closer to achieving our strategic targets of process optimization and reducing risks.

—Sebastian Rottenwöhler,
Project Leader, MAN IT Services GmbH

Industry

Vehicle manufacturing

Customer

MAN Nutzfahrzeuge

Business Challenges

- Absence of local storage for vehicle information and master data
- No centralized view of individual phases in the lifecycle of commercial vehicles
- Costly maintenance of paper archives and media disruptions
- Continual process interruptions at system, department and company boundaries

Business Solution

- Livelink ECM – Enterprise Archive Server
- Livelink ECM – Production Document Management

Business Advantages

- Minimization of legal risk through secure archiving and documentation of all vehicle relevant information
- Shortened search times and optimized customer service via quick access to central vehicle document archive
- Greatly improved process efficiencies and cost savings through digitalization of documents
- Supports value added company-wide initiatives
- Protects investments through the integration of Open Text solutions with existing IT systems (SAP)

Livelink ECM: The Right Fit

A holistic, company-wide ECM infrastructure places demands on corresponding solutions, particularly SAP, with regard to company-wide scalability and easy of integration into third-party systems. This is because one of the objectives of the electronic vehicle document project was for the MAN service branches, which were already connected to the new vehicle information system (ESA FIS) on an SAP basis, to have access to the vehicle documents via an SAP client.

With this in mind, Open Text's Livelink ECM – Enterprise Archive Server for document archiving in combination with Livelink ECM – Production Document Management (PDMS) for file representation, access and processing, turned out to be the most suitable solution.

In addition to specialists from MAN IT Services and Open Text, specialist departments were also involved in the project from the outset. "Not only did that generate a high level of acceptance when it went live," says Rottenwöhler, "it also led to faster project development overall, and there were few calls for additional changes later on down the line. This enabled the archive with the PDMS solution from Open Text to go live as early as July 2006."

Seamless Company-wide Documentation

There are currently over 100 MAN Nutzfahrzeuge employees in Sales, Production and Service working with the ECM infrastructure. If the production order has been placed, an initial master data record is created with a unique vehicle number. This is transferred to ESA FIS and then onto the Open Text system. Additionally, the vehicle test records, driver's cab records, axle assembly parts lists and warranty documents are recorded electronically and filed using the mass import interface from Livelink ECM – PDMS in the Open Text archive, complete with a reference number for the associated master data record. Once the vehicle has been delivered and the invoice has been issued to the customer, the initial master data record is added in ESA FIS with further attributes—such as debtor or order number from the commercial host system—and transferred to the Open Text system. The vehicle document, comprising metadata (e.g., search criteria used to find documents in the archive) and associated documents, is then complete.

In the event of a warranty claim, service personnel can directly access vehicle documents using the browser interface from Livelink ECM – PDMS, and its wide range of versatile functions. They can add information to documents that chart the progress and outcome of the warranty process—using, for example, photos of the claim or correspondence. If the commercial vehicle happens to be from a third-party manufacturer that MAN Nutzfahrzeuge has supplied with components—for example a truck axle—service personnel will create a new master data record and link this to any related documents.



Livelink ECM: Helps Achieve Future Objectives

"With the electronic vehicle document platform in use at MAN Nutzfahrzeuge since July 2006, we are one decisive step closer to achieving our strategic targets of process optimization and reducing risks," says Rottenwöhler. "The next steps are to remove the final media disruptions and to expand the user group, for which we already have the basic infrastructure in place."

By the end of 2007, MAN service branches with ESA connection should be able to use the electronic vehicle document system within the holistic SAP client (provided by MAN Nutzfahrzeuge) independently. This will be possible through the seamless integration of Livelink ECM – PDMS in SAP®-R/3®. By offering worldwide access to electronic vehicle documents, the user group will grow significantly, and many of the intermediate stages previously required and carried out by the internal service department at MAN Nutzfahrzeuge can be omitted. A further stage, which will take place in 2008, will be the abolition of vehicle test records in paper form.

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Sales	Americas	Europe	Asia/Pacific
<p>www.opentext.com sales@opentext.com</p> <p>North America Sales 1 800 499 6544</p> <p>International Sales +1 800 4996 5440</p>	<p>United States 100 Tri-State Int'l Pkwy Lincolnshire, IL 60069</p> <p>Phone: +1 847 267 9330 Fax: +1 847 267 9332 Toll Free: +1 800 538 7723</p>	<p>Germany Technopark 2 Werner-von-Siemens-Ring 20 D-85630 Grasbrunn</p> <p>Phone: +49 89 4629 0 Fax: +49 89 4629 1199</p>	<p>United Kingdom Grosvenor House, Horseshoe Crescent, Beaconsfield Buckinghamshire HP9 1LJ</p> <p>Phone: +44 1494 679700 Fax: +44 1494 679707</p>
			<p>Australia Level 23 100 Miller Street, North Sydney NSW 2060</p> <p>Phone: +61 2 9026 3400 Fax: +61 2 9026 3455</p>

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