

LANSA Case Study

Cenveo Envelope provides a unified view of multiple ERP systems with LANSA

Cenveo's Envelope Group is one of the world's largest envelope manufacturers, producing one out of every four envelopes in the United States with a wide variety of types and seals. Cenveo Envelope uses LANSA for many of its IT solutions, including providing a unified web portal to multiple ERP solutions, extending and modernizing its solutions and various application and data integration tasks.

Scott Steinacher, Developer and Data Architect at Cenveo Envelope, says, "We used LANSA to develop a sophisticated web application that provides our users with a unified view of enterprise data. The solution has improved customer service, reduced license fees and simplified training. We also use LANSA for various integration tasks, such as web services and exchanging XML documents. All without intensive coding."



The Need to Integrate

The IT history of Cenveo Envelope is inherited from National Envelope, which Cenveo acquired in 2013. National Envelope, which acquired multiple companies itself, ended up with multiple ERP systems. These included two home-grown ERP systems and two packaged ERP solutions: JD Edwards (from Oracle) and Infor LN (previously Baan).

"Integrating data from diverse systems was one of the challenges faced by the technology group", explains Aaron Brown, IT Director at Cenveo Envelope. "Users on both sides of the firewall wanted a unified view of data from across the enterprise."

However, the unique characteristics of each system made it difficult to provide a cohesive view. To help minimize transportation costs, customers can place orders at a location nearest to them. Since customers also often have offices across the country, their orders may reside in multiple systems.

"We wanted to provide a better service experience, especially for those customers who chose to use the phone. They should only have to place one call to their nearest Cenveo office and their questions should be answered immediately," adds Brown.

With that goal in mind, the technology group used Visual LANSA and LANSA Integrator to create a system that provides browser-based access to order, production, inventory and shipment data across the company.

"With LANSA we developed a solution that improves service and helps the bottom line."

Integration Across Multiple ERPs

The new system, aptly named "Unity", culls data from four ERP applications and three databases (SQL Server, DB2 for i and Informix). What's more, it gives users access to millions of PDF documents such as invoices, statements and work orders.

Unity's main focal point is a single Web page with just four tabs. The Shipments tab displays delivery information, the Production tab provides manufacturing details, while the Order Header and Detail tabs present information about the customer and orders. Within each tab, data appears in grids that can be re-sorted by clicking on any column. Each grid also features subject-sensitive links that can be used to drill down to more detailed data.

In addition to viewing data on Web pages, Unity users can generate and distribute spreadsheets with a wide variety of selection criteria, including date ranges, order types, customer and product attributes. The spreadsheets are not simple 'CSV dumps' that contain flat text data, either. Thanks to LANSA Integrator's Excel services, columns contain true dates, numbers and so forth, and are professionally formatted with multiple fonts and colors. LANSA Integrator's SMTP service then delivers the spreadsheets to one or more recipients via email.



As the project progressed, a small group of pilot users helped fine-tune Unity. Most LANSA development and JDE integration was performed by Steinacher, while several programmers provided integration support for the other backend systems. From concept to pilot, the project required roughly three months.

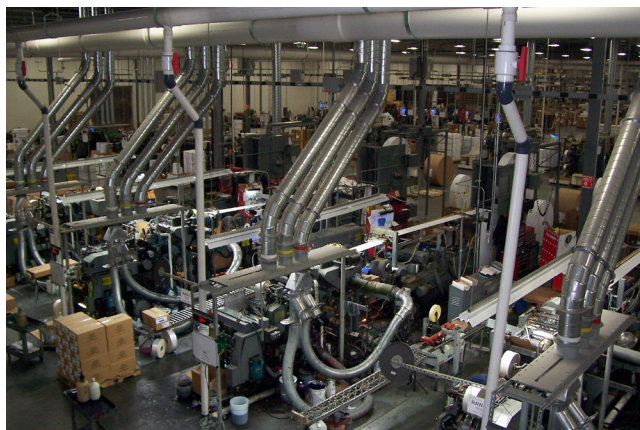
“Visual LANSA is very productive, because it eliminates the need to use JavaScript or any other language or technology”, says Steinacher. “LANSA Integrator also proved invaluable. Without having to code at the sockets level, we can populate spreadsheets and Web pages with data from multiple backend databases. Conversely, from a single source, we can push data to multiple backend systems.”

Better Customer Service

Sales reps, customer service personnel and other users rely on Unity to access data from across the company. A staff member in an East Coast plant can easily view orders at a facility in California, for example. The need to call around has been greatly reduced.

“With LANSA we created an intuitive, modern web application that offers lots of context sensitive help and instructions. It even has its own FAQ to answer common questions. There is virtually no need for training. If you can use google, you can use Unity.”

Theresa Kasesnik, an Account Executive at Cenveo Envelope’s New York facility, agrees. Kasesnik piloted Unity and contributed to its success. Given that most of her business revolves around



Cenveo Envelope’s state-of-the-art envelope manufacturing facility in Ennis, Texas, USA.

“We can’t afford to spend hours writing low-level code if a tool can do it for us.”

custom orders, she receives lots of phone calls about envelope specifications - sizes, colors, materials, prices, availability etcetera.

“With Unity, I can locate orders instantly,” says Kasesnik. “For example, if a customer calls about a specific order, but all he or she knows is that it was for a 9-by-12 white wove envelope, I can find all the orders that match that specification, regardless of where they were processed. I can then zoom in on the results with other criteria and view invoices in PDF format. Also, I can sort the information on my screen in any way I want, which makes it easy to analyze data right in my browser,” continues Kasesnik.

“Being able to view what was ordered at other locations and at which price, helps me to give better advice to customers. I estimate that Unity has increased my efficiency level by 20% to 30%”, she concludes. “For the customer, that means getting all their questions answered in one phone call.”

Steinacher points out that from a cost perspective, it is a big plus that Unity is browser-based. “Both Baan and JD Edwards charge license fees per user. With LANSA, we developed a solution that reduces our need for additional licenses. Technology that improves service and helps the bottom line is sorely needed in today’s climate”, says Steinacher.

Productivity is Key

“We plan to continue using LANSA to deliver innovative solutions,” says Steinacher. “Our focus is always on the customer. For the technology group, that means using our expertise to help the company build tighter relationships with its customer base. Whether it’s letting customers view data over the Web or integrating their systems with our own, LANSA helps.”

“In lean times, productivity is more important than ever”, concludes Steinacher. “We can’t afford to spend hours writing low-level code if tools can do it for us. LANSA’s IDE comes with an editor, compiler, debugger, data dictionary and page designer. Also, because of its Framework, it provides a structured, rapid-development environment. It’s the most pragmatic development solution I’ve seen.”

Company and System Information

- Cenveo, with a \$2-billion annual turnover, is a world leader in the management and distribution of print and related offerings. Headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut, Cenveo encompasses more than two dozen entities in over 100 facilities across the U.S., as well as manufacturing operations in Asia, South America and Central America.
- Unity is integrated with JD Edwards (from Oracle), Infor LN (previously Baan) and several homegrown applications that reside in a mixture of IBM i and Windows platforms. Database integration points include SQL Server, DB2 for i and Informix.
- For more information about Cenveo Envelope visit: www.cenveo.com/Products-Services/Envelopes

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