

LANSA Case Study

Godiva improves efficiency with LANSA Data Sync Direct

Some companies adopt GS1 just for compliance sake, while others see GS1 as an opportunity to improve product information and procedures that go far beyond GS1. Godiva Chocolatier, Inc., the world famous chocolate maker, has implemented LANSA's Data Sync Direct as its Product Information Management (PIM) solution and as its solution to synchronize supply chain information with its wholesale customers over the GDSN (Global Data Synchronization Network).

GS1 compliance was not the most important driver for Godiva and less than half the product attributes the company is capturing are related to GS1. Data Sync Direct serves as the company's central repository for product information and consistently feeds accurate and up-to-date data to downstream systems and to third parties. Being able to maintain and manage product information in a central place, with proper workflow procedures and audit trails has helped Godiva to streamline its procedures from product development to marketing and sales.

Keeping Track of Attributes

Godiva Chocolatier is a manufacturer of premium chocolates and related products, such as truffles, coffee, cocoa, biscuits, dipped fruits and sweets, chocolate liqueurs and more. Godiva, founded in Belgium in 1926, was brought to America in 1966 and has been the leader in premium chocolate ever since. Godiva owns and operates over 600 retail boutiques worldwide, B2C Web sites and its products are also available via select department and specialty stores.

Godiva's regional offices run their ERP systems on a single IBM i server. These ERP systems include individually customized versions of BPCS in Brussels and Hong Kong and PRMS in Japan and North America. Godiva uses Island Pacific for its retail sales audit function, also on the same IBM i server, and has IT staff in all mentioned locations.

Godiva has over 2,000 wholesale customers in the US and Canada, mostly department stores and other retailers. These stores need to be kept up to date with product information. Prior to using Data Sync Direct, Godiva was depending on MS Excel to manually upload information into the 1WorldSync data pool. Godiva was also using manual procedures and Excel to capture product attributes that were not available in its PRMS system.

Christine Moore, Product Master Data Manager at Godiva, explains, "It was labor intensive to safeguard the accuracy of information. Product attributes were kept in a number of Excel and Access files by various departments and individuals. Consolidating the multiplicity of files required expert knowledge and manual effort."



"The improved level of accountability helps to track compliance by department."

"As business was growing, it became nearly impossible to keep track of product attributes and manage them for all our retail and wholesale channels without a PIM tool," continues Moore. "We needed a proper central database to house product information, an audit trail to capture product changes and a workflow facility to support related procedures. We needed all those things."

Not Just for GS1 Compliance

In searching for a robust PIM solution, Godiva looked at market analyst's reports and submitted RFPs (Request for Proposal) to several vendors. This resulted in the submission of four proposals that Godiva considered worthy of pursuing. One of these was from Weidenhammer Systems Corporation, an information technology firm that had provided consultancy services to Godiva for several years.

Snapshot

Customer: Godiva Chocolatier, founded in Belgium in 1926, is a manufacturer of premium chocolates and related products.
www.godiva.com

Challenge: Product attributes were maintained in multiple files, requiring expert knowledge and manual effort to be consolidated.

Solution: A central database where staff can concurrently maintain the attributes they are responsible for, supported by proper workflow and audit procedures.

Key Benefits: Less manual effort to maintain and distribute product information, improved level of accountability, streamlined procedures and easier tracking of compliance.

Product Used: Data Sync Direct

Weidenhammer proposed LANSA's Data Sync Direct solution.

Susan Phillips, Project Manager EDI at Godiva, together with Moore, produced a list of criteria that the solution had to meet:

- Be rolled out globally – multilingual and easy integration with multiple ERP systems.
- Manage workflow, audit trail and security.
- Connect to the GDSN with all pertinent messaging capabilities.
- Capture Godiva-specific attributes and manage a four level deep product hierarchy.
- Allow for customized reporting, such as for price list and sell sheet creation.
- Disseminate data internally to all relevant departments.

"Of the four solutions that we extensively researched, LANSA Data Sync Direct suited our needs best," says Moore.

During the implementation project, Moore and Phillips spent much of their time interviewing users of the different departments that would be using the solution, to make sure that the right attributes were defined and collected. "We weren't implementing the system for a specific division or just for GS1 compliance. We wanted to capture all attributes, both those that needed to be visible within the company and those that needed to be available to our supply chain," says Moore.

An added implementation challenge for Godiva was to capture the dimensions for some of its unusual shaped product items, such as the seasonal Valentine, Easter and Christmas items. They can be in the shape of a heart, egg, teddy-bear, and so on. GS1 on-boarding staff, whose New Jersey office isn't far from Godiva, came out to Godiva's company store to ensure data quality standards were met. They bought one of almost every product and spent nearly three days measuring and weighing the products. (There might have been some product tasting as well and it was probably one of their nicest ever on-boarding projects.)

Concurrent Workflow

The concurrent workflow feature, an integral part of LANSA Data Sync Direct, allows Godiva to kick off tasks to multiple attribute owners in several departments, asking them, for example, to provide specific information by a certain due date. When staff members sign-on to the system, they get to see the tasks assigned to them. Attribute owners can be product oriented, responsible for an individual product or class of products. Or they can be responsible for a group of attributes by function, such as product development, marketing, packaging, and so on.



Since 1926 Godiva has been the premier maker of the fine Belgian chocolate. Today the Godiva brand is known – and loved – in over 80 countries around the world.

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"The concurrent workflow is one of my favorite features," explains Moore. "Staff can work on their particular attributes simultaneously. I don't have to wait for a staff member to do his or her part before I can kick off a task to another staff member, even when they are working on attributes for the same product."

Benefits

According to Moore, the Data Sync Direct solution has improved accountability. "It is much easier now to track whether or not attribute owners have done what they needed to do. In case of a hold-up, I can go directly to the responsible person and find out what the issue is. The improved level of accountability helps to track compliance by department and streamline the process," continues Moore.

Moore also feels that procedures are more efficient because of the solution's audit trail "All product changes show up in the audit trail and I can see who has made the change. This ensures that I am informed promptly and allows me to ask the right questions to the right person."

Godiva uses LANSA's end user reporting tool (LANSA Client) to generate price lists for its wholesale customers. The price lists, customized to Godiva's requirements contain GDSN information, such as dimensions, weight and pricing. The report shows the SKU (Stock Keeping Unit) as the identifier, while displaying all packaging levels on the same line. "It's a simple report that has changed the life of our marketing team dramatically. Not just because of the speed of getting price lists generated, but also because of the increased level of detail. Our customers benefit as well, as it helps them to plan their shelf space," says Moore.

Moore finds it an enormous advantage that all data is now stored and maintained in a central place. "All GDSN and Godiva attributes are kept centrally. Previously everyone would send me spreadsheets and I would need to consolidate their information in yet another spreadsheet. Having a central database where people can maintain their own attributes has been tremendously beneficial. We now have a single source of the truth for all product data."

Phillips says that Data Sync Direct works smoothly from an IT point of view. "Its embedded security allows us to limit user access to specific tasks and product categories. We could have deployed Data Sync Direct on Windows, but we preferred to have it on the same IBM i server as our PRMS system. Integration was straightforward and keeping it all on the same server was very cost effective. Data Sync Direct is very reasonably priced as well, allowing us to deliver the project on a modest budget."

Multilingual Global Roll Out

Phillips concludes, "The LANSA team was awesome to work with. They didn't just assist us with the technical implementation, but also with business decisions as they have extensive knowledge on GS1 and GDSN subject matters.

"Our plan is to roll out the solution to our offices in Europe, Asia and Japan," concludes Moore. "That's why LANSA's multilingual capability and regional support are important."

"PIM and GDSN are business projects rather than IT projects. My advice is to consult your business users and do your homework upfront. When that's done, the actual implementation should be easy."

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