

# Data consistency reduces product time-to-market by 60 percent

### Background

Office Depot provides business supplies and services to companies and individuals in 56 countries through a network that includes 1,800 stores, websites and business-to-business structures. In Europe, it operates in 13 countries through its two main brands, Office Depot and Viking, with retail stores in France and Sweden. It supplies everything from IT equipment and furniture through to document services and daily consumables such as pens, paper and printer toner.

The company has sales of approximately €14 billion and employs about 56,000 people.

### Challenge

Office Depot is a company that thrives by providing the best solutions for clients' constantly changing workplaces. But in 2009, the company noted that its own workplace was changing at an accelerated pace. Customers were demanding increasingly detailed product information but, since this came from numerous departments as well as third-party suppliers, data lacked any consistency. "The departments responsible for our publications and merchandising were spending too long categorising products," explains Norbert Donders, Office Depot's Manager of Product Data Management. "While we should have been focusing on selling products, sometimes it seemed like we were only processing data."

### Customer Details

Office Depot  
[www.officedepot.eu](http://www.officedepot.eu)

### Industry

Solutions for the modern workplace

### Challenge

- ◆ No internal consistency of product details
- ◆ Staff were spending too long inputting product data
- ◆ The time-to-market for new products was too high
- ◆ Customers were not always getting the information they needed.

### Solution

- ◆ The deployment of a Master Data Management (MDM) solution by Stibo Systems has created an environment where perfectly-formatted data only needs to be inputted once, regardless of the source.

### Continuing Benefits

- ◆ New product time-to-market reduced by 60%
- ◆ The likelihood of input errors has been reduced
- ◆ Office Depot is now free to look to the future and add more client data to the MDM environment.

## Solution

Indeed, so many staff members were spending so long standardising product data that it was affecting the time-to-market for new products. Office Depot's search for a more streamlined process led the company's small project team to consider Master Data Management (MDM) and, in particular, Stibo Systems' STEP solution. Starting with one country, one region and one channel, the company identified key data on products, customers and locations. This was stored in a central repository and used to feed the organisation's other systems, such as its enterprise resource planning (ERP) system.

An inventory of guidelines then ensured that each department would know what information it was expected to supply, who was responsible for data entry and how it would all be combined. "For example," says Donders, "my department is particularly concerned with new data types and the relationships between data, while another department is responsible for the operational data."

**"MDM is not an IT issue but the responsibility of the whole business. The MDM manager is a service provider within the company."**

Norbert Donders  
Manager of Product Data management, Office Depot

## Results

After establishing the basics, the MDM team wanted to put more data online. "With our old way of working, this would have given rise to a lot more work," says Donders. "But now we've set up a structure and tools, we only need to set up the product data once."

To ensure greater consistency, even across products supplied by third parties, Office Depot has also started using data brokers. "There are pros and cons to this as the data becomes available to our competitors, so of course you lose some control," says Donders. "But it allows us to deliver the right data to our customers. Moreover, the broker arranges the data, so we only need to concern ourselves with publishing it online. It's also good for our suppliers as they only have to supply the data to a single party, not to dozens of resellers."

By ensuring the right criteria of data are met, all data in the MDM systems is created to a gold standard, a so-called golden record, regardless of the data's origin. This 'do it once, do it right' methodology ensures that consistency is maintained across all channels and all countries.

The result can be seen in an incredible improvement in efficiency. "By implementing a content management system that's fed with data from MDM, we're able to develop our online catalogue thirty to forty percent faster," says Donders. "Using master data has also improved our online search functions, meaning that our customers can now find products more easily with fewer searches being abandoned prematurely. As our websites are now fed with MDM, rather than manually, we've also managed to reduce the number of errors."

## About Stibo Systems

Stibo Systems is the global leader in multi-domain Master Data Management (MDM) solutions. Industry leaders rely on Stibo Systems to provide cross-channel consistency by linking product, customer, supplier data and other organisational data. This enables businesses to make more effective decisions, improve sales and build value. During the last 30 years, Stibo Systems has helped leading companies to develop a trusted source of strategic information. A privately held subsidiary of the Stibo A/S group, which was originally founded in 1794, Stibo Systems' corporate headquarters is located in Aarhus, Denmark.

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