

SOLUTION SNAPSHOT:

- **Industry:** Consumer Goods
- **Challenge:** Connect global operations and integrate internal systems for improved efficiencies
- **Solution:**
—GXS BizManager® BizLink®

BENEFITS:

- Exchange any data (EDI, XML, binary, flat file)
- Control internal communications
- Connect with business partners
- Comply with GS1's global data synchronization requirements
- Reduce costs by minimizing reliance on VANs

Dole

The Situation

With revenues greater than \$4.8 billion, Dole is the world's largest producer and marketer of high quality fresh fruits, vegetables and fresh-cut flowers. The company also markets a growing line of packaged foods. Founded in 1851, it does business in more than 90 countries and employs approximately 36,000 full-time employees and 23,000 full-time seasonal or temporary employees. At Dole's corporate headquarters, located in Westlake Village, Calif., managing and tracking connectivity with its divisions throughout the world using a single software application was key for Dole to improve efficiency and increase productivity.

The Business Challenge

As B2B e-commerce gains ground in the consumer packaged goods industry, many firms are developing or joining private networks to optimize communication with their business partners. But for large global entities, an external focus alone is not sufficient. Getting critical business data through the door in an acceptable format only solves half the problem. Making that information accessible within an organization made up of complex and diverse divisions throughout the world is the other half.

As a worldwide corporation, Dole manages a diverse network of global shipping, manufacturing and sales operations. Dole's Fresh Fruit division owns the ships, ports where they dock, containers, shipping yards and warehouse facilities. "We needed a system that would enable connectivity with all of our global operations, as well as support internal systems," said Alan Kenworthy, Systems Business Manager for Dole's Information Technology Services Group (ITSG).

The Dole organization is connected through a worldwide WAN. Around the world, Dole relies on systems based on Hewlett-Packard, AS/400 and Windows platforms. With such a complex infrastructure, Dole has made distributing information through its WAN to internal decision makers a top priority.

A Complete Solution

Dole turned to GXS to handle its external and internal connectivity needs. GXS BizManager® BizLink® is a robust data exchange solution that provides connectivity along with transaction tracking, auditing and management.

Like many consumer goods companies, Dole has a sizable investment in electronic data interchange (EDI). Dole's Packaged Foods division completes over 250,000 transactions per year; about 90 percent of the company's order transactions are exchanged using EDI. Most of the division's customers are EDI-enabled; several, such as Meijer, exchange

documents using the AS2 standard. Others, including several large retailers, have unique solutions, some of which do not include use of the Internet, opting instead for direct frame relay-based solutions. Dole has gained value in using BizManager with all of them.

Leveraging the Internet to Reduce Costs

By using BizManager to connect with its customers, third-party warehouses, brokers and other business partners, Dole is able to capitalize on its EDI investment and, at the same time, reduce the number of transactions its Packaged Foods and Fresh Fruit divisions conduct over value-added networks (VANs).

Gearing Up for XML and GS1

For Dole, the ability to communicate using XML was rapidly becoming a business necessity. GS1 (formerly Uniform Code Council), an organization driving standards-based electronic commerce in the retail market and key to Dole's global business strategy, uses XML as its primary data format standard. Users of the GS1 network, which include trading partners, solution providers and B2B marketplaces, are able to form collaborative trading relationships based on industry standards and synchronized compliant data. "We believe [GS1] will be essential to our long-term business strategy and the success of e-commerce in the consumer packaged goods industry," said Kenworthy. XML—not EDI—is the data format required for [GS1] participation, but that doesn't mean the company is moving away from EDI. BizManager was able to provide Dole with a solution equally adept at handling both XML and EDI.

Improving Warehouse Efficiencies

Dole's Packaged Foods division ships all product sourced offshore to a dozen third-party warehouses. After customer order transactions, warehouse transactions account for the bulk of the company's external communications. Every order generates at least two shipping transactions—one specifying what to ship and one confirming what actually shipped. Revisions to orders add to the load.

At one time, Dole provided its warehouses with terminals and required data to be entered directly into the Dole system. This created redundancies, as the warehouse had to enter the same data into its own system as well. For over seven years, Dole relied on EDI, VANs and a set of transactions that handle all communications for greater efficiency. Now, Dole is taking advantage of BizManager's connectivity and ease of use to migrate these transactions to the Internet. "With approximately half of the warehouses now connected, BizManager handles 50 percent of our warehouse transactions: more than 125,000 transactions annually and growing," according to Kenworthy.

Integrating Internal Systems

In addition to connecting Dole's existing EDI base and handling XML requirements, BizManager supports Dole's internal systems integration through its "any-to-any" connectivity capability. Interface connectivity between internal systems enables Dole not only to

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transfer critical data, but also to minimize the risk that occurs if internal equipment fails. Using BizManager, Dole administrators are alerted when data transfers within its world-wide WAN (stretching from California to Europe, Latin America and Asia) fail because a machine or line is down. In these cases, BizManager will retry the communication session a predetermined number of times, then send an alert. Once the issue is resolved, the data is easily resent, using BizManager's web-based interface.

Internally, Dole relies on AS/400s and HP systems. Files are routinely extracted from AS/400s and sent to HP machines. With BizManager, Dole now has the ability to control internal communications and the visibility to monitor data exchange regardless of platform or data type.

Paving a Path to the Future

The ability to support both EDI and XML, as well as virtually any data type, has improved Dole's communications both externally and internally. "We now have greater visibility into daily operations with the ability to monitor data exchange and control internal communications, and we have significantly reduced costs through these efficiencies and through less reliance on VANs," said Kenworthy. "With BizManager we no longer have to rely on a myriad of custom FTP scripts, written in various languages, on multiple platforms, using different standards. Now everything is in one place, easily accessed and maintained." As a corporate entity, Dole is implementing multiple projects and using BizManager to pull information from around the world. Because the company is connected to a WAN, all data is sent via FTP. BizManager's versatility and its ability to send and receive all document types have greatly benefited Dole.

Dole anticipates significant growth in its transaction volume over the next several years as it moves forward with e-commerce initiatives. With this growth, Dole plans to move its communication protocol from FTP to HTTP/s and AS2, a more reliable form of transport. The company anticipates that there will be renewed interest in exchanges and that 1SYNC will provide a springboard for many activities. It plans on meeting its growing needs with GXS.

"There are obvious opportunities to be gained by improving communications flow internally and externally. As we leverage the technology and what we've learned from the information, Dole is well positioned for continued industry leadership. [GXS] prepares us for that future."

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About GXS

GXS is a leading provider of B2B e-commerce solutions and operates the world's largest and most expansive network of integrated business communities. The company's software and services simplify and enhance businesses process integration and collaboration among networks of trading partners. Organizations worldwide, including more than 75 percent of the Fortune 500, use GXS solutions to extend their supply chain networks, optimize product launches, automate warehouse receiving, manage electronic payments and gain supply chain visibility. Based in Gaithersburg, Maryland, GXS has operations and offices around the world. For more information, see <http://www.gxs.com>, <http://blogs.gxs.com> and <http://twitter.com/gxs>.

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