

A STEP AHEAD OF THE COMPETITION WITH INNOVATIVE PROCESSES

Midsize vendors who enjoy long-term success in a dynamic market have optimized their customer-oriented processes. Take Swiss company Styner+Bienz, which handles enquiry and quotation management with SupplyOn's Sourcing Manager solution. The solution guarantees the company high process quality while maintaining its competitiveness.



Styner+Bienz's customers include some of the world's most prominent automotive companies. "The main reason our customers are so successful is that they continually optimize their products and processes, which includes the management of their vendor networks," says Christoph Affolter, Key Account Manager for Bosch. "If we want to be successful as a component vendor in an intensely competitive market, we need to keep pace with this innovation." The standardization and automation of transaction processes plays a decisive role in this respect. Consequently, many of Styner+Bienz's customers, such as Bosch, Continental and Hella, use the web-based collaboration platform from SupplyOn. "We've been using SupplyOn to handle several processes with our customers for six years now and it has been a very good experience," says Affolter.

of all received and issued quotations and gives the user full access to all the necessary documents for drawing up a high-quality quotation. The solution is supplemented by the SupplyOn Business Directory. With the aid of this vendor database, every purchasing department in the customer's company can view the company details and complete product and service portfolio of the component vendor, which results in a growing number of enquiries and greater customer loyalty.

"SupplyOn Sourcing Manager was very simple to introduce," says Affolter. "After a two-day training course from SupplyOn we implemented the solution at our end. It took a certain amount of our and our customers' time to make all the necessary adjustments, but since then our processes have been running very smoothly."

"We do not just supply parts, we make our know-how available to the customer very early on in the project. A partnership on this close level obviously requires optimum communication processes, and that is what the SupplyOn collaboration platform provides."

Christoph Affolter, Key Account Manager, Styner+Bienz

A key role is played by SupplyOn Sourcing Manager, which enables efficient management of the enquiry and quotation process. Component vendors can use Sourcing Manager to receive enquiries from their customers and issue quotations electronically. The solution gives a structured overview

Flexibility and systematic approach are key benefits

Today, Styner+Bienz issues an average of 50 quotations per year with Sourcing Manager. The process has shaped up to be highly efficient. It generally takes five days from the receipt of an enquiry to the issuing of the quotation; entering the quotation in the system takes around 20 minutes. For Affolter, the key benefits of the solution are its systematic approach and its flexibility. Firstly, the process is standardized for all customers. This gives rise to learning effects that make the whole procedure quicker, better quality and therefore more cost-effective. Secondly, there is very little need for customer-specific knowledge: "Once you get to grips with the system you can use it effectively. This substantially reduces the risks associated with the customer manager being on vacation, ill or absent for any other reason,"

explains Affolter. "So we would benefit if as many processes as possible were standardized on the basis of an efficient solution."

Another advantage is offered by the Business Directory vendor database, which gives all the customer's purchasing departments access to the details of vendors linked to the database: "Through the Business Directory we even receive enquiries from factories we have never done business with before. This increases customer penetration, which is strategically important with respect to sales and customer loyalty," says Affolter.

Trend towards more integration in value-added chain

Establishing digital processes that span the whole company does not just boost efficiency. "In recent years our market

has become much more demanding and dynamic, partly due to growing complexity and partly due to financial pressure from low-wage countries," says Affolter. "You need to be open to new ideas and able to put them into practice quickly."

Styner+Bienz is meeting these challenges with a strong will to innovate and an ever closer relationship with its customers: "We do not just supply parts, we make our know-how available to the customer very early on in the project," explains Affolter. In this way Styner+Bienz helps its customers launch new products faster – a service that vendors from low-wage countries cannot offer. "A partnership on this close level obviously requires optimum communication processes, and that is what the SupplyOn collaboration platform provides," concludes Affolter.



Styner+Bienz

Styner+Bienz is one of Europe's leading specialists in stamping and forming technology. One in three new cars worldwide is equipped with ABS housing covers from Styner+Bienz. The company assists its customers with parts design, forming technology and product development, carries out basic testing and builds sample parts and prototypes. Styner+Bienz employs more than 550 people with an annual turnover of close to 140 million Swiss francs.

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