



ABOUT THE CLIENT

Starting out as a small family-owned business in 1926, the company expanded their offerings and cultivated a passion for design and innovation. Creating high-quality, finely crafted architectural elements helped them grow into the largest supplier and manufacturer of solid wood and composite moldings in North America. Currently operating manufacturing facilities and 26 distribution centers in North America.

Material Master Solution

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Business growth demanded an automated solution for SAP Material Master adjustments that would ensure data integrity, business rule compliance, visibility into the process, and eliminate costly and error-prone manual data entry. The solution needed to be scalable to support an aggressive growth plan imposed by upper management. The client was utilizing a complex Excel-based form (template) in conjunction with SharePoint workflow to collect data from various business users. This system presented numerous challenges.

Challenge #1: Template Maintenance. In order to support effective master data management, the Excel template limited some of the SAP data to dropdown lists. When values changed in SAP, it was necessary to update the dropdown lists in the template. After completing these changes, a new version of the template would be distributed throughout the business, yet there was no version control regime to ensure users were utilizing the most current version of the template.

Challenge #2: Business Rule Compliance. It was not possible to ensure business rules were followed based on varying combinations of data. Many of the users completing the data did not understand the downstream impact of data, which required 100% manual inspection and correction by data stewards.

Challenge #3: Missed SLAs. The SharePoint workflow process required “pushing and pulling” a new request through the process, which often led to missed Service Level Agreement commitments due to a lack of visibility into the process as well as the inability to remind users of tasks that were coming due or overdue.

Challenge #4: Manual Entry & Data Integrity. Once a request was completed and the data was manually corrected by a data steward it was manually keyed into SAP, which often resulted in additional data entry errors.

APPROACH AND DISCOVERY

The client identified a feature list for software selection that would replace the current system and solve the inherent problems:

- Webforms (for structured data-entry)
- Automated real-time updates of drop-down lists
- An Enterprise-Class Business Rules Engine
- Simplified and transparent workflow with Reporting and Dashboards
- Seamless SAP and non-SAP system integration

After a three-year software selection journey, in-depth research of several Robotic Process Automation (RPA) platforms, demos and reference checks from multiple vendors, the business selected Decisions for SAP Solutions™. Several key factors led to this outcome:

Decisions for SAP Solutions™...

1. Exceeded their list of must-have features
2. True No-Code development
3. Glowing customer reviews of
 - a. the software
 - b. our commitment to customer service
4. Lowest cost of ownership

RESULTS AND IMPACT

The company implemented a Material Master Create, Read, Update and Delete (CRUD) solution that enforced complex business rules, included a combination of real-time and cached SAP drop-downs, automated workflow tasks with email notifications, and SLA monitoring and compliance. Upon approval, the data is posted directly from the web form to SAP via the authorized user's SAP credentials, ensuring compliance with SAP authorization protocols. The need to manually correct data in advance of updating SAP was significantly reduced. With its ease-of-use, user adoption was rapid, meaning the business was able to avoid a prolonged phased roll-out approach.

The overall design included 9 contributing business groups, 200+ business rules, 133 form fields, and over 10,000 characteristic drop-down combinations. The initial design was completed by a single developer over a six-month period. Halfway through the Material Master project a Vendor Master project was started in parallel. The Vendor Master solution went live in advance of the Material Master solution.

Additional savings were realized by eliminating the "push and pull" SharePoint workflow process and data quality was dramatically improved. The Material Master solution labor savings alone resulted in a payback period of less than 2.5 years. By adding Customer Master and Vendor Master solutions the payback period will further decrease to 18 months.

- 1) Drop downs work to enforce uniformity of input as they are not free form data entry. Updating them manually defeats this essential functionality.
- 2) Even with more features than the other solutions evaluated, **Decisions for SAP Solutions™** had the lowest overall cost of ownership (largely due to our **server vs users licensing model**).

PLANNED ADDITIONS

Future development plans include a Customer Master solution, replacing SAP's Legacy System Migration Workbench (LSMW) mass upload solutions, and developing a Transform and Load solution to reduce the time required to migrate legacy system data into SAP as the company grows through acquisitions.

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