



Assmang Chrome



MACHADODORP WORKS

Boost business efficiency through automated faxing.

The Company

Assmang Limited is a company incorporated in the Republic of South Africa to supply raw material to the world's steel mills and alloy plants. Formed in 1935 - and listed on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in 1936 - the Group employs 2,865 permanent employees.

Originally named The Associated Manganese Mines of South Africa Limited, it changed its name to Assmang Limited on 30 May 2001. Assmang, jointly owned by African Rainbow Minerals Limited (50%) and Assore Limited (50%), currently has three operating divisions based on its three commodities, chrome, manganese and iron ore. Although each division operates independently, together they strive to achieve optimum efficiencies.

Assmang's Manganese Division consists of the manganese mines in the Northern Cape, Nchwaning and Gloria, and the ferromanganese works at Cato Ridge in KwaZulu-Natal. The Chrome Division consists of the Dwarsrivier chrome mine and the Machadodorp ferrochrome works both in Mpumalanga, while the Iron Ore Division is made up of the Beeshoek mine and the Khumani iron ore project in the Northern Cape around Postmasburg and on the three farms adjacent to Kumba Resources' Sishen mine, respectively.

The Challenge

Assmang Chrome had a simple document delivery solution that picked up their business documents in a PDF format and faxed it out. The main problem with this fax solution was that if any modification had to be made on the PDF document, a developer had to be scheduled to visit and make the necessary changes required, which was a considerable cost to the

business as this was occurring every three to four months. Also trying to actually schedule development time was becoming very difficult due to the resource availability of the solution provider. This was impacting the process efficiency and business improvement for Assmang Chrome as approximately 3,500 RFQ's (Request For Quotation) and PO's (Purchase Orders) were being sent out per month by fax so any delays in modifications for improving the documents were having a direct impact on this.

This was also causing frustration within the procurement department as they wanted to make changes to the RFQ's and PO's to help streamline the process and make sure the suppliers had all the available information in order to provide the best quote or correct order, but they were unable to do so under the current solution.

The Solution

As a result of the inefficiencies being caused by the current solution, the heads of development and procurement began the task of researching the market and finding another solution that could provide the right capabilities that Assmang Chrome required.



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As well as Esker DeliveryWare a number of other solutions were shortlisted including Rightfax, WinFax and FormScape. These were all chosen on the basis of having the right fit for the underlining issues that Assmang Chrome wished to address, concerning document modifications and delivery. However, after reviewing each solution Esker was chosen as the preferred supplier.

Chris Jansen van Vuuren, Developer JDE / WEB /SQL, Assmang Chrome – Machadodorp Works, commented: “Esker had a more complete solution than the other vendors we evaluated. It wasn’t just a fax solution but a full document process automation solution providing us with multiple format document delivery. Esker DeliveryWare also enables us to actually develop our documents ourselves making any necessary modifications as we see fit.”

Jansen van Vuuren continued: “Esker had a solution that was easy to use and provided better flexibility than the other solutions we evaluated. I can now make changes or add information to any document. Or I can retrieve a document, take any information from it and convert it to any other document type such as XML, TIFF, PDF or place it straight into a database such as SQL”.

The Benefits

The main areas of improvement have been the ability to save costs with the requirements in labour, development, support and modification adjustments through being able to complete this in-house. Plus increased visibility and management of documents has lead to more efficient departmental areas of the business.

Jansen van Vuuren said: “The implementation was straightforward and Esker provided all the necessary training in order for us to simply add, configure, format and deliver any new documents that we wanted to produce. This allowed us to reduce not only the costs in development time but also a reduction in the time required to send out our documents”.

Jansen van Vuuren continued: “We send approximately 175 documents per day (Including RFQ’s, PO’s and Invoices) and have actually managed to save over 3 hours per day within the procurement department when changing from manual faxing to automated faxing. This has allowed labour resource to become more efficient in their job roles as they now have additional time to focus on more critical areas such as identifying cheaper prices for materials, faster turnaround on purchases and quicker cash collection cycle times”.

Jansen van Vuuren concluded: “We have also improved the visibility of our business through the use of the Esker Document Manager which allows us to effectively manage our documents through an audit trail providing the capability for us to track all actions performed on our documents; including retrieving, initiator of the action, and the exact time and date of the operation. Before we had this tool the process was understandably inefficient with every query having to be manually handled”.

The Future

After successfully implementing the Esker DeliveryWare Solution, Assmang Chrome is now looking to replicate the same benefits from Document Process Automation that have been gained here to other areas of the business.