



Belgian Railways on the Right Track with OpenText Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions

Solution helps meet compliance standards, providing faster, more accurate delivery and capture of documentation—with audit and traceability

Belgian Railways, headquartered in Brussels, employ more than 21,000 staff, providing transportation for more than 200 million passengers and handling over 60 million tons of freight each year. In total, they operate over 550 stations and stops, using around 1,500 locomotives and numerous other pieces of rolling stock and infrastructure.

With operations and maintenance taking place around the clock, not only do Belgian Railways provide services based on their own fleet, track, and other infrastructure, they also provide services and maintenance for high-speed, international services, including Eurostar™ and Thalys.

Belgian Railways face a complex set of business drivers—they range from cost optimisation whilst seeking to enhance their customer service through to punctuality with uncompromising safety against a backdrop of a maturing workforce leading to a new generation of employees coming on board. At each and every turn, there is a need to generate, capture, store, retrieve, and manage documents of all types, much of which are required in the context of one or a number of business processes being undertaken.

Document overload

Keeping track of the all documentation, drawings, and maintenance records for such a large, varied and complex set of assets presented a multitude of challenges.

Information was stored in a number of disparate systems, legacy databases, and file servers together with a large quantity of physical paper.

Belgian Railways had undertaken a journey of transformation to help them meet their goals and had implemented SAP® ERP as a strategic platform for change and to enable more agile business processes. They then sought a way to bring unstructured content such as documents and drawings into their core business processes. By managing all the data in one place—providing access to documentation on-demand—Belgian Railways would ensure their staff would not suffer document overload. By only having to deal, in context, with relevant documents both captured and delivered proactively, staff would be freed up to concentrate on important safety, maintenance, or customer service-focused tasks.

Documentation of all types, including more than 140,000 vendor invoices per year; around 1 million technical drawings produced by some 340 engineers and required by

INDUSTRY

Transportation

CUSTOMER

Belgian Railways

CHALLENGES

- Reduce costs, improve punctuality of rail services, and raise safety standards—all requiring efficient document access and capture
- Meet European-wide compliance standards on rolling stock maintenance record keeping—audit and traceability
- Improve document access and delivery to maintenance and operation staff—device independent

SOLUTION

- OpenText Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions

BENEFITS

- Reduced total cost of ownership of organisation's information assets—less paper production and lower storage costs
- Simplified access to unstructured information for all staff from multiple user interfaces
- Achieved compliance with European legislation on safety and maintenance record keeping—fully traceable



more than 1800 planners, technical workers, purchasers, etc.; plus the employee files of their 21,000 strong workforce are among the many millions of documents that would require proper management.

The importance of staff being able to access information through a variety of interfaces and being able to rely on the information they are presented with cannot be underestimated. Costly errors could occur if ordering the wrong spare parts if using wrong or out-of-date technical drawings. This could have a knock-on effect on safety too. Ordering and installing an inappropriate part could lead to premature component failure—the consequences of which could be devastating.

Establishing a vision for the future

Belgian Railways set out a vision for the future where all business processes would be content-enabled, removing much of the paper that flowed through the organisation. By establishing the vision, business process reengineering efforts would have a framework to work within. With SAP as their core system, they looked to augment the functionality to include the vast quantity of documentation used every day by their staff.

This document-enabled approach supports Belgian Railways' goals of cost reduction—upwards of €3 million savings per year—better service, complete audit and traceability, and overall improved organisational performance. With complete integration of documentation into the business processes, a complete audit trail and visibility could be established.

Selecting the solution

When looking at the market for suitable and capable extensions to SAP to meet their document needs, OpenText was selected for its long-standing history and partnership with SAP.

“We wanted a solution that was proven and could be demonstrated to work from the outset. We did not want a long, costly integration project. OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions (also sold by SAP as SAP Extended ECM by OpenText) is tightly integrated and works out of the box, so it was a natural choice for us,” says Stephane Haelterman, Extended ECM Project Manager, Belgian Railways.

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—STEPHANE HAELTERMAN,
EXTENDED ECM PROJECT
MANAGER, BELGIAN RAILWAYS

A project team was established that would call upon the expertise of a number of parties, including SAP, OpenText, and other providers to Belgian Railways.

Implementing the vision

A number of areas were identified for the first phases of the implementation to help build up the skills and knowledge of the solution. Concentrating on rolling stock maintenance and the ‘Intelligent Driver Assistant,’ where documents can be served to and captured from train operating staff, has provided the confidence to expand the usage of the solution. Soon, other areas, including high-speed train maintenance, human resources, customer relationship management, and web content management will be live, taking the total user community from around 6,000 to over 9,000 and growing eventually to over 11,500.

Over a period of four years, a total enterprise asset management vision will be built, extending to all quality management, project documentation, extended areas of HR, and full information lifecycle management. The solution has provided a platform on which processes can and have been standardised across the organisation and the expected savings of €3 million per year on

are track to be achieved. Around 2.5 million documents were added to the solution in the first year, growing by some 1.3 million each year to over 7.5 million after five years.

“We recognise the full potential that the combined forces of OpenText and SAP can provide Belgian Railways. We have a vision to deliver a complete enterprise asset and information system, encompassing all information and business processes—delivering to our strategic goals of cost management, customer service, safety, and compliance,” Haelterman adds.

Users who may have resisted change initially are now feeling the benefit—no longer do they have to spend considerable time searching for information that they may not be able to trust. They simply perform a search and are presented with the information they require and can rely on it to be the one source of the truth. For example, nearly 9,000 employees now access dedicated training materials via Employee Self Service utilizing the SAP Enterprise Portal.

Room to grow

With the foundational platform now established and providing fast, accurate information access—in-context—staff now have the confidence that the information they are being served is the one source of the truth. This has led to the possibility to further grow the use and application of the technology. For example, more than 5,000 train drivers will shortly be able to use mobile data devices to access latest bulletins and record service information in real-time. This not only makes information distribution more effective and efficient, but it removes the need for a 20kg backpack of paper procedures and regulations to be carried each and every day by staff, something that could have long-term health and safety implications. Relevant information can be pushed to the mobile devices based on an individual's profile.

“With Belgian Railways offering new services to its customers, such as packaged holidays, the OpenText and SAP solution is more than capable of handling the information and document management needs this creates. We've a long list of potential applications, not only for this but other innovative applications such as case management, lead to order, corporate communications, and so on,” Haelterman concludes. ■