

# Success Story: WebEDI in the Automotive Industry



Vibracoustic is a full-range supplier of vibration technology for cars and trucks. Thanks to consistent customer orientation, global structures, and superb industry expertise, Vibracoustic has an excellent reputation as the founding developer of technical vibration modules and components for the international automotive industry. Vibracoustic currently operates 24 locations worldwide and supplies its products to all leading automobile manufacturers. Its operations are focused on the four key business areas of drive trains, motor bearings, chassis, and suspension struts. The company was founded in 2001 as a joint venture with Phoenix AG. Since the beginning of 2005, Vibracoustic is wholly owned by Freudenberg & Co. With its approximately 2,000 employees, the automotive manufacturer achieved sales of €413 million in 2004.

## **Vibracoustic automates Business Partner Collaboration via WebEDI**

Thanks to Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), companies can accelerate their business processes in addition to reducing inventory, margin of error, and process costs. In the automotive industry nearly all original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and major first-tier suppliers utilize EDI. Data is transferred bilaterally between the business partners from one application to another. Documents that may be exchanged electronically include orders, delivery calls, deliveries, stock movements, and invoices.

Since its founding, the automotive manufacturer Vibracoustic has used EDI in business transactions. Alongside traditional EDI, Vibracoustic employs a WebEDI platform to connect suppliers. The platform has been productive since the beginning of 2005, and it has been available to suppliers since that time. Now suppliers can choose whether they want to use traditional EDI or WebEDI when working with Vibracoustic. This way companies can benefit from the advantages of electronic data exchange even if they lack their own EDI connection technology.

All business partners require is an Internet-compatible computer with a Web browser and a printer. Data is retrieved and processed over the Web. Required data is entered directly into online Web forms.

The WebEDI platform is a standardized transaction and communication platform for the entire supply chain. Efficient supply chain management is made possible through the integration of Vibracoustic in the existing SAP system landscape, and this benefits all involved business partners. Electronic data is fully exchanged online—no longer requiring the process of being printed manually, sent per mail or fax, and retrieved again by the business partner.

This allows quicker handling of procurement and delivery processes, potentially reduces errors that occur in manual recording, and saves personnel costs. In the framework of the “dock-to-dock” project from Vibracoustic—which aims at accelerating processes between goods receipt and goods issue—the application plays a key role in speeding up and securing the communications process with suppliers.

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Vibracoustic developed and implemented the WebEDI platform together with its strategic IT partner Freudenberg IT (F+IT).

The system is based on the ODETTE and VDA recommendations, which are both firmly established in the automotive industry. These recommendations describe the layout and data content of the applications. Vibracoustic's business partners can use WebEDI to display and confirm orders, record delivery and shipping data, and print necessary papers and package labels.

In addition, the platform supports displaying delivery calls as well as printing all delivery and shipping data for direct and third party business. Furthermore, it is possible to display stock movements and call up stock overviews of all materials for processing consignment procedures.

*"Through the combination of WebEDI and simultaneous mapping of processes in the SAP system, we have succeeded in implementing fully automated mapping of direct delivery of production material for us, as well as delivering merchandise to customers. We are able to increase the quality and the speed of both processes, and to significantly improve them,"* explains Reinhard Falke, IT and Process Organization Manager at Vibracoustic.

In the future, Vibracoustic wants to offer its business partners an even broader functions range. Examples of projects in planning include precision delivery calls, pick-up sheets, invoices, remittance advice, and displaying credit notes.

Vibracoustic has also outsourced its WebEDI system operation and support to Freudenberg IT. The IT service provider ensures platform availability and meets the highest data security and access standards.

Freudenberg IT also took over supplier and customer training in addition to providing second-level support to Vibracoustic.

*"We are pleased to have found a partner in Freudenberg IT that has many years of experience in the automotive industry and proven know-how in enterprise application integration. With the WebEDI platform, we have jointly developed an innovative IT solution that will offer a long-term benefit to all customers and suppliers,"* says Falke.

The screenshot displays the WebEDI interface for a delivery schedule. At the top, the vibracoustic logo and tagline "We convert noise and vibration into sound and comfort" are visible. The user is logged in as 'User #1001' for 'Kunststoffverarbeitung GmbH' with partner number '00001001'. The main section is titled 'Delivery schedule details' for 'Factory Hamburg' and 'Article R799053602 Name Flansch'. It includes a table for 'Packaging instructions' and 'Article data' with columns for hierarchy, customer, supplier, article text, and quantity. A table at the bottom shows a delivery schedule with columns for 'Date', 'Quantity', and 'Status'.

Hierarchy	Customer	Supplier	Article text	Quantity	Total quantity
1	L1896		EUR-Gitterboxpalette	1	1
2	R799053602		Flansch	1056	1056

Date	Quantity	Status
14.12.2005	1056	●●
28.12.2005	2112	●●
11.01.2006	1056	●●
18.01.2006	1056	●●
25.01.2006	1056	●●
01.02.2006	1056	●●
08.02.2006	1056	●●

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