Case Study

Garant Möbel Malaysia

Country:
Malaysia

Industry:
Retail

B2BE Solutions:
EDI, e-Catalogue

Business Objective

Garant wanted to embark on a plan to create a full-service B2B online electronic catalogue system. They also wanted a product data repository but also an area for sales, marketing, product management and procurement.

Business Benefits

The most distinctive benefits come from the overall goal of serving their Trading Partners better which comprises of both local GMM franchisees' and overseas corporate customers.

The Company

Garant Möbel Malaysia (GMM) chooses B2BE to provide an Electronic Catalogue system to assist with improving its supply chain management and improve conventional business process with their Trading Partners, which has proven to be a great success story for GMM, their local franchisees and overseas customers alike!

Garant Möbel is a global furniture franchise originating in Germany with a 47-year history; Garant Möbel has more than 4,000 retail member stores worldwide in 20 different countries. Garant Möbel Malaysia (GMM) holds a master franchise license from Garant Möbel Asia. GMM now carries more than 4,000 furniture products and with a business retail network of 7 franchisee stores operating nationally in Malaysia.

As part of its commitment to the highest level of operation efficiency and customer services, Garant Möbel has embarked on a number of technology based initiatives to help GMM better manage their supply chain and overall business process to reduce cost and time spent in product management, sales & marketing activities and customer service. This included an ambitious electronic catalogue project that leverages the company's existing IT infrastructure in an exciting new way through B2BE.

The Challenge

In March 2005 GMM embarked on a plan to create a full-service B2B online electronic catalogue system. Debbie Loo, the President of GMM not only wanted the electronic catalogue system to serve as a product data repository but also have the capability to form an interactive platform which will assist the GMM business in the areas of sales, marketing, product management and procurement while providing an effective e-commerce trading platform which must be effective and cost efficient.

Debbie Loo also felt that to maximise the value proposition to both GMM and their Franchisee members as well as customers the solution would need to maintain and return real time information from their back-end business systems. The system also needed to enable Corporate Accounts with the ability to browse and view all products including technical and product information, place orders, and gain real-time access to account information, negotiated pricing, and inventory status. "A lot of the companies we talked to at the time had built websites or e-Business applications that were not really able to help us to realise the possibilities of establishing an end-to-end integration process with our back-end systems," says Debbie. " It was kind of a smoke and mirror solution behind the scenes. We were looking for a complete end-to-end solution that was fully integrated, allowing us to leverage our existing IT investments."

The Solution

After a detailed evaluation and investigation of vendor offerings, GMM chose the B2BE Electronic Catalogue solution. Debbie says the decision was made based on an analysis of its overall ease of use and system flexibility to enable adoption within the furniture business environment. The dynamic charging model as well as the potential to leverage on B2BE Transaction Delivery Network Services (EDI) platform to transmit electronic business data to and from the GMM back-end business system and its trading community which formed part of future plans and initiatives also was highly attractive. "B2BE Electronic Catalogue is the only solution which caters to all our requirements and with additional value-added features, from online product data repository and management functionality, preparation of marketing material, e-Commerce enablement to enable data integration with our existing IT business system in a cost justified manner as the solution is fully hosted by B2BE and saves us from the hassle of hardware investment and its associated cost in the long run" says Debbie.

One of the project's first tasks that required tackling was the provision of a fully customised electronic catalogue system that will assist GMM manage all 4000 product items which included enriched data content. The electronic catalogue needed to also handle product data content systematically by category, type, series, concept, price, supplier, materials, product packages and combination of products and product packages. Prior to this, GMM housed all product data manually in multiple Access databases where it was difficult and time consuming task for the product team and marketing team to retrieve and compile product pricing reports and prepare catalogues. "It will take up to at least 5-7 days for us to produce the price list report and because of the massive data size contained in the Access database, we will have to split the data into multiple files and store it in multiple databases and within CDs. When we come to new catalogue compilation, we will have to search CD by CD to locate the respective product details, like images, and copy the data over manually to our catalogue template. This will take even longer when it comes to product package catalogue compilation" says Eliane Nishiguchi the Marketing Manager of GMM.

1 . Online PDF Catalogue Compiler & Electronic Catalogue Distribution

Using the B2BE electronic catalogue, the GMM product team is now able to maintain all product data systematically in a centralised online repository which includes rich content detail, this has then allowed the GMM Marketing team and Sales team to view the complete product catalogue and data set as soon as it has been published into the electronic catalogue system.

The in-built online PDF catalogue compiler in the electronic catalogue has also given the flexibility the GMM Marketing & Sales teams require to generate and compile dynamic PDF catalogues using different GMM corporate catalogue templates by simply choosing which product they would like to be inserted into which catalogue template, " The online PDF catalogue compiler has allowed each individual of our Marketing and Sales teams to generate their own catalogue which is requested by both our customers and franchisee members, within a second the catalogue can be produced on the fly online, no more time wasting in sourcing data from CDs" says Eliane Nishiguchi.

The B2BE electronic catalogue product was a fully integrated solution with the B2BE Transaction Delivery Network, this allows any product data to be easily exchanged electronically with GMM Trading Partners via the web, facsimile, email and end-to-end direct system delivery using the Electronic Catalogue Distribution (ECD) function. "This is another innovative function which allows us to distribute our catalogue electronically and easily to our customers from the online catalogue environment, regardless of whether they want it via email or facsimile, we can get it delivered in seconds; our customers were all amazed with the speed of our response time in regards to their request" says Eliane Nishiguchi.

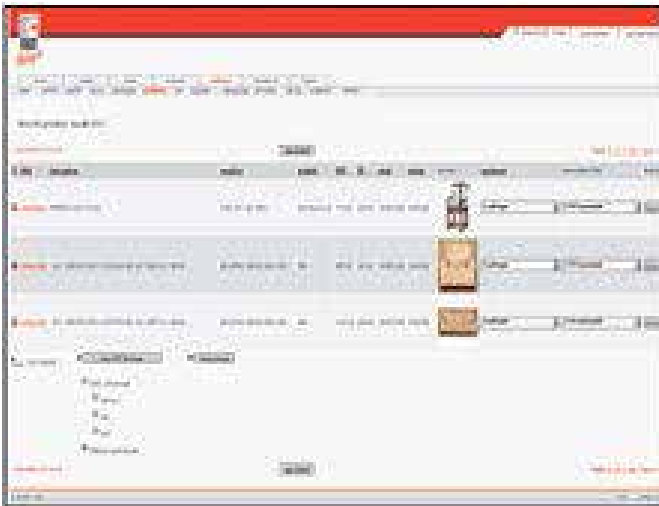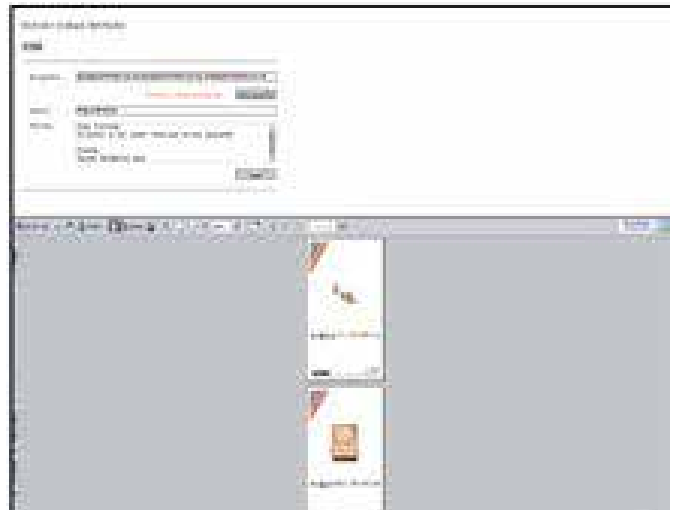**Figure 1.1 Dynamic Online PDF Compiler**

**Figure 1.2 Electronic Catalogue
Distribution & Online PDF Catalogue**

2. Online Business Reporting

The electronic catalogue system allows the GMM product team to generate business reporting. For example, Product Price Range Analysis reports which are used by the GMM Management for business analysis and Product Price List reporting to be used by the GMM sales teams as well as the franchisee.

By accessing the 'My Report' section (refer to figure 2) in the electronic catalogue interface, the GMM product team can customise and select the products and product package to be included in the Product Price Range Analysis report, with a click, the PDF report will be generated and displayed in the electronic catalogue environment (refer to figure 2.1).

When it comes to the Product Price List report, the GMM product team are able to perform a similar request generating the price list within seconds instead of 5-days. "Life is so much easier now, generating a report is not a big task anymore for our team, with all the time saving in the report preparation, we can devote more effort to pricing analysis and strategic planning" says Eliane Nishiguchi.

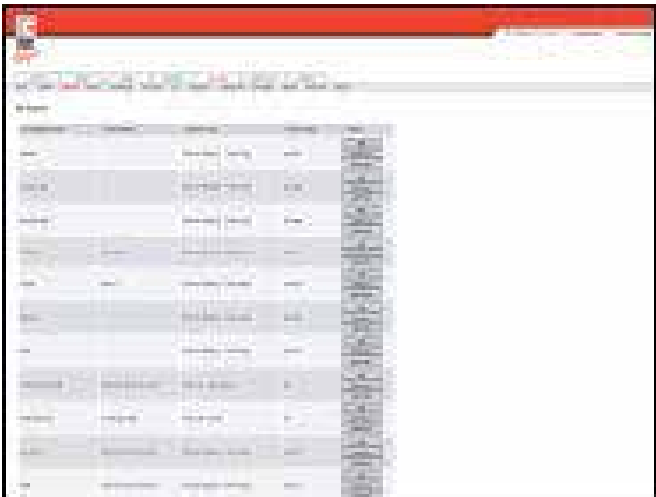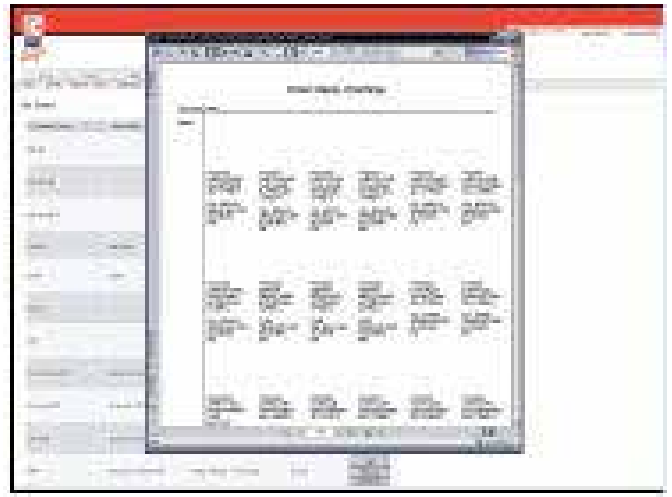**Figure 2 My Report for Online Business Reporting**

Figure 2.1 Online Generated Business Report Output in PDF Format

3. Seamless Data Flow with End-to-end Integration

With commitment to a fully integrated solution, all product data hosted in the electronic catalogue can easily be exported and translated to GMM back-end business system file format, MK II business system via direct automated data transmission through the B2BE EDI. GMM can always perform a manual synchronisation by first exporting the selected product data in the electronic catalogue data base into MK II CSV file format and subsequently loading the data manually back into the MK II system (refer to figure 3).

In order to ensure all electronic catalogue data is compatible with the MK II data structure environ-ment, a data structure validation rules engine has been built in the electronic catalogue with well defined MK II system data struc-tures. The data structure valida-tion rules engine will perform the validation process to ensure all the exported data will meet the MK II data structure standard, e.g. the length of the field in the product descriptions... etc.

In the event of any data violating the rules specified in the rules engine, it will prompt the user with recommended changes which can be made on the specific data field.

**Figure 3 ERP Data Synchronization with
Data Validation Rules Engine Built-in**

4. Data Accuracy and Control with Error Tracking and Audit Trail

B2BE understand that in order for a company to fully maximise the usage of an electronic catalogue system and create optimal efficiency in the overall business environment, the key factor is to ensure the accuracy of all data contained in the system which can also be easily maintained in a secured environment.
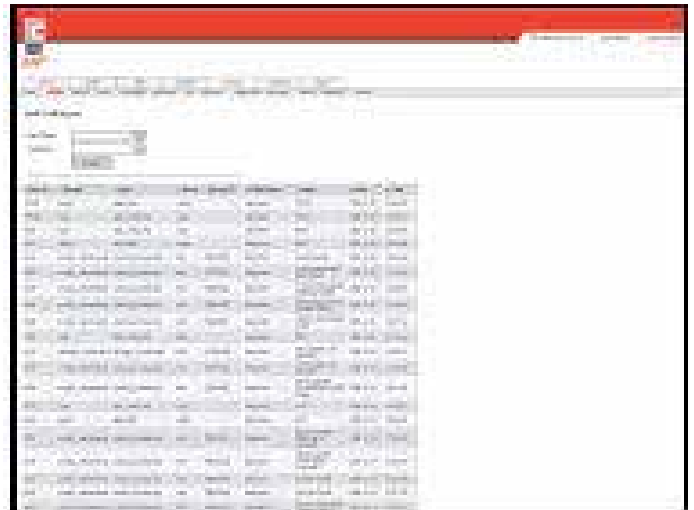
With the data error tracking feature (refer to figure 4) in the electronic catalogue, GMM users are able to trace any errors such as missing fields, invalid entry of information on any of the products in the electronic catalogue environment. Users may pin point any of the errors in the product data easily by using the error tracking function.

On the other hand, the built-in audit trail function acts as a system logbook in keeping track of all user activities (refer to figure 4.1).

Figure 4 Error Tracking Tools for Quick Data Error Scanning

Figure 4.1 Audit Trail on All User Activities

5. The Economic Point of View

One of the critical criteria for GMM is to ensure the electronic catalogue can be easily justified in terms of ROI and must be cost effective on an ongoing and long term basis.

The B2BE electronic catalogue system as a solution is completely hosted by B2BE which has directly allowed GMM to save investing in acquiring hardware and all the ongoing associated maintenance and depreciation costs. Having the electronic catalogue hosted on B2BE infrastructure, means that the system implementation processes has been carried out easily and hassle free from a GMM perspective.

With a group of dedicated infrastructure support personnel within B2BE, this has also guaranteed GMM that the electronic catalogue system will operate in a secure and well supported environment.

The Results

Debbie Loo says GMM has been able to achieve numerous cost-savings and efficiencies through the electronic catalogue implementations, but the most distinctive benefits come from the overall goal of serving their Trading Partners better which comprises of both local GMM franchisees' and overseas corporate customers. GMM Trading Partners are now able to get a faster response to their requests and ultimately conduct business in a more systematic and efficient manner.

"We've been able to give our customers greater satisfaction dealing with GMM, we are now able to accommodate their requests instantly, no longer needing to wait for hours or days as before" she says. "And because GMM sales team is spending less time looking up product information and in the preparation of sales material, they are now able to spend more time selling."

Future Developement

Based on the success of the B2BE electronic catalogue implementation to date, GMM has decided to press ahead with several other initiatives. GMM has planned using the platform to incorporate the online ordering management module which will enable the GMM electronic catalogue to service both the GMM world wide corporate customers and the nationwide retail customer for electronic trading.

About B2BE

B2BE delivers electronic supply chain solutions globally allowing organisations to better manage their supply chain processes, providing greater levels of visibility, auditability and control. With over 20+ years of experience, the B2BE teams operate in over 20 countries and regions and speak 17 different languages. We are trusted by over 6000+ customers with more than +58,000 trading relationships.

For more information, visit **www.b2be.com**