"ACSIS has given us the integration capabilities we needed to take full advantage of contract manufacturing, which is often a quicker route to market," the COE member noted. "Because we can better manage our partners and capture global supply chain data with ACSIS solutions, our division is able to realize the full benefits of end-to-end visibility and control of the supply chain."

BACKGROUND

The DuPont Protection Technologies strategic business unit (DPT SBU) is focused on protecting lives, protecting critical processes, and protecting the environment. The segment serves customers in markets which include construction, transportation, communications, industrial chemicals, oil and gas, electric utilities, automotive, manufacturing, defense, homeland security, and safety consulting. The DPT SBU produces some of the best known product lines in DuPont such as Kevlar®, Nomex®, Tyvek®, and Sontara®.

- DuPont Kevlar® brand fiber has earned worldwide recognition as a high-performance material for helping to protect human life. Its use extends far beyond the body armor used by the military and law enforcement community. Today, Kevlar® is used in everything from airplane parts to reinforced suspension bridge structures to suspension bridge cables to fiber optic cables, not to mention a variety of consumer goods.
- DuPont Nomex® brand fiber provides permanent flame-resistant thermal protection. With high break strength, tear resistance and abrasion resistance properties, garments made of Nomex® brand fiber help protect firefighters, race car drivers and industrial workers alike.
- DuPont Tyvek® brand fiber offers protection from lead dust, mold, asbestos and many other dry particle and aerosol hazards that industrial workers come in contact with every day.

CHALLENGE

To efficiently convert these materials into finished products used by the military, first responders, and industry and law enforcement requires an extensively integrated, multi-level third-party global supply chain for both manufacturing and distribution. ACSIS partnered with DuPont to implement a system to provide DuPont with the visibility and control necessary to effectively manage this supply chain end-to-end.

The problem facing the global SAP team was how to connect over 125 incremental value-add partners to the DuPont SAP Systemin order to manage the supply chain effectively end-to-end. Prior to this project, there were gaps in the overall supply chain visibility; only some contractors were connected via various highly custom data interchange methods.

Additional goals included:

- Provide third-party partners with a simple, menu-driven task interface requiring no SAP training Provide a web-based interface, thereby avoiding the need for locally installed software.

- Gain E2E visibility of inventories and progressive manufacturing process stages for all work in process, improving DuPont's planning and delivery capability.
- Provide third-party contractors with visibility of incoming demand to better rationalize their operations.
- Standardize labeling of DuPont products globally from a central source, using ERP data and producing labels directly at third-party sites over the Internet.

SOLUTION

Understanding that centralizing the activities of a vast network of third parties required a technology partner with high levels of both SAP and supply chain integration expertise, the company enlisted ACSIS to help make its plan a reality. Already familiar with ACSIS from previous implementations the company quickly recognized that ACSIS possessed a deep knowledge of its operations and was an ideal vendor for this project.

As a first step, ACSIS reviewed the current process the company employed to communicate with its manufacturing and distribution partners. The analysis showed that only a small number of them had the ability to connect directly to the SAP system via customized data interchange methods— leading to gaps in overall supply chain visibility and lags in service.

To help the division provide its partners with a standardized, streamlined means of interfacing with its SAP system— and to deliver the visibility needed for effective supply chain management— ACSIS implemented its Partner Management component to enable real-time synchronization of data between the company and its partners.

Part of the ACSIS Solution, the Partner Management module forms a layer on top of the company's SAP system that monitors and shares real-time, critical partner execution events with third-party warehouses, contract manufacturers and suppliers—helping to reduce costs and improve overall supply chain responsiveness, velocity and efficiency. "With ACSIS Partner Management, our colleagues are now able to communicate and interact with the SAP environment as if they were one of our own warehouse or plant facilities," the COE member says.

BENEFITS

Initiated in September of 2007, the project spanned three phases—one each for the Asia-Pacific, European and North American regions—with the final stages wrapping up in July of 2009. By the end of this large-scale engagement, the company had a system in place across its value chain that greatly enhanced control over global production and management processes— and provided the visibility needed to quickly anticipate and adjust to fluctuations in supply and demand.

To help the company maintain its existing security measures, ACSIS installed Partner Management outside the company's firewall as a dedicated area in which third parties can place and manage orders. Information is exchanged via IBM MQSeries message queuing through the company's firewall and into its platform, helping to ensure the ongoing security of the transactions traversing the network each day.

In addition, the project included a phase that integrated ACSIS Partner Management with the company's ELM solution to enable all partner locations to create and print custom format labels from the enterprise application data on the SAP system. This capability centralizes the partners' printing activities, eliminating hidden costs and helping the company ensure that all labels generated at third-party locations follow a standardized format.

For more information on ACSIS Cloud Solutions for the Intelligent Supply Chain, contact us at 856.673.3000 or email us at info@acsisinc.com