

The Campbell Soup Company Improves PDQ



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Rod Edwards
Campbell's

Campbell's enhances operational efficiency and service to customers with UDEX PDQ Solutions

Originally founded in 1869, the Campbell Soup Company (Campbell's) has become one of the world's most familiar and trusted brands. The name Campbell's and the familiar can are synonymous with soup to countless millions, and today the company makes and markets hundreds of products globally through its regional divisions.

Campbell's United Kingdom division offers Campbell's soups and several other well-known household brands, including Bachelors, Oxo, and Homepride. But Campbell's in the UK delivers far more than wholesome foods. The company also delivers high-quality product data to its retail trading partners using UDEX Product Data Quality (PDQ) Solutions. Since turning to UDEX, Campbell's has been able to improve its operational processes and provide enhanced value and service to its customers.

Errors Increase Logistics Costs

Prior to adopting UDEX, Campbell's lacked an emphasis on product data quality. The company estimates that as much as 50 percent of its product data contained errors. For instance, after sending product and pallet size data to a third party logistics provider, Campbell's discovered that a significant portion of the information was wrong. When the products arrived at the provider's warehouse, they did not fit in the space designed for them. At that time, most product information was exchanged with customers using paper and manual processes, but in today's data-dependent environment, ERP systems need reliable data to perform optimally.

As retailers in the UK became interested in electronic data exchange, they became more concerned with product data quality. Many of Campbell's customers began mandating that suppliers increase the quality of their product data. The penalties for not providing quality data were significant: some retailers instituted policies of refusing to accept shipments if product sizing data was incorrect.

According to Rod Edwards, Campbell's business systems process manager for manufacturing and logistics, "Our customer's interest in receiving cleaner product data acted as a catalyst for improving our product data quality. Product data has serious implications for logistics and customer service. When deliveries are returned, that costs us a considerable amount of money plus lost sales."

Accurate, Consistent, and Complete Product Data

With the growing interest in product data quality, Campbell's retailer and foodservice wholesaler customers began exploring the use of UDEX PDQ Solutions. UDEX PDQ Solutions help suppliers create accurate, consistent, and complete product data. UDEX then certifies that the data is of a sufficient quality to be submitted to trading partners. On the demand side, UDEX PDQ Solutions filter incoming product data to ensure that it is certified and then integrate the data into the buyer's master data.

Executive Summary

The United Kingdom-based branch of the Campbell Soup Company recognized the need to improve the quality of the product data it exchanged with retailers. With the goal of satisfying customer demands for accurate, consistent, and complete product data, Campbell's turned to UDEX PDQ Solutions. Since making UDEX a part of its business processes, Campbell's has been able to:

- Reduce invoicing issues and credits
- Improve logistics processes
- Serve customers better
- Populate ERP systems with higher quality data
- Prepare for RFID and data pools

Campbell's decided to turn to UDEX in 2002. Initially, Sainsbury's Supermarkets, a leading retailer and key Campbell's customer, drove Campbell's adoption of UDEX PDQ Solutions, but the majority of Campbell's large retail customers now use UDEX as well. In addition, many foodservice wholesalers also access Campbell's product data through UDEX.

"Twenty of our largest customers, including Tesco and Sainsbury's, have adopted UDEX as a part of their buying process," explains Wendy Buffham, Campbell's customer services coordinator. "Within UDEX, we maintain complete sets of product attributes for approximately 300 products. All the product data we need to serve our customers is in one place, and it's accurate."

Quality Data Drives Efficiencies

Campbell's has made UDEX an integral part of its product data management processes. When new products are introduced, all the relevant product attributes, such as ingredients, weights, and pallet size, are collected from key stakeholders. Once the process is complete, Campbell's customers can purchase the new products and populate their internal systems with the relevant product data. If products are changed, the new information is entered into UDEX. Again, Campbell's customers can then readily access the accurate, consistent, and complete product data.

"Retailers like UDEX because it helps them to order and plan more accurately," says Edwards. "So it benefits us from a customer service perspective. UDEX is a key part of our business process today. It has made us more aware of how we use product data within our own systems. Now the product data within our own ERP system is correct. Having more accurate data in our systems helps us to operate more efficiently."

Buffham points to accounts receivable as one of the areas where UDEX has resulted in noticeable process improvements for Campbell's and its customers. She notes, "If you have an order rejected because of a data error, it takes quite a bit of time and effort on both sides to resolve the problem. You have to identify the reasons and write credit notes against the original invoice. UDEX reduces those types of issues."

Ready for the Future

Product data is becoming increasingly important as new ways of doing business, such as data pools and RFID, emerge. Companies across retail and manufacturing sectors are scrambling to adopt these more efficient methodologies and finding that their product data is too flawed to support them. But Campbell's believes that it is well positioned to reap the rewards of these new processes thanks in part to UDEX.

"Retailers and manufacturers are moving to processes that are very dependent on quality product data," says Edwards. "I anticipate dramatic improvements in invoicing, receivables, logistics, and customer service processes. We see UDEX and clean product data as essential to making new methodologies like RFID and data pools deliver benefits."



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