

How Etex Group uses real-time visibility to increase customer satisfaction

Addressing challenges with RTV

For the Etex Group, the main challenges fell into two categories: logistics and customer service. As the construction industry has changed, so have customer needs and requirements. Etex Group has found that where order sizes are now smaller and more companies operate on a just-in-time basis, the need for visibility and shipments to arrive on time is more important than ever before.

This creates the need for quick, accurate information exchange across the businesses. Previously, relaying information to the customer meant going through a long process of phone calls; from the customer to Etex's customer service department, then to the logistics department which tries to locate the driver, and then back again in reverse to provide the customer with information.

Using real-time visibility (RTV), Etex Group is able to drastically cut down on the number of phone calls made and, from a customer service perspective, customers are provided with accurate information whenever they need it. Likewise, having RTV enabled allows Etex Group to gain a competitive edge with current and prospective clients.

Etex Group is also able to use the data generated from RTV to generate internal operational efficiencies. For example, Etex Group is able to see when shipments are going to be delayed and proactively uses this information to get in touch with

a customer before they contact them first. This allows the customer to problem solve on their end ahead of time and enables Etex Group to look at its own loading locations and reprioritise loads and labour accordingly.

Solution

The Etex Group uses one single instance SAP system alongside Transporeon, which houses all its standard functionalities of connectivity and load slot booking. Therefore, implementing RTV from Sixfold as part of Transporeon was a natural second step for its Europe operations.

Etex Group chose to start with multiple pilots around its European locations, eventually rolling out to individual locations. Etex Group is currently using RTV in Italy, France, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, United Kingdom, Spain, and the Netherlands. Due to the variety of different companies within the Etex Group, different methodologies of distribution, and differing market group requirements, the Group decided to roll out RTV on a per location basis. Doing so enabled Etex to dedicate time and allocate local labour to ensure project success.



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The Etex logo features the word 'etex' in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter 'x' is stylized with a red and orange gradient, and a small red and orange shape resembling a stylized 'x' or a corner bracket is positioned to the right of the 'x'.



Client: Etex Group

Etex Group is a global building materials company specialising in the production of plasterboard, fibre cement, fire protection materials, as well as wood and steel framing. The company was established in 1905 and now has 110 sites worldwide, across 42 countries. Over the past few years Etex has pioneered in modular lightweight solutions, building in a way that is faster, more sustainable, resource friendly and affordable. Building on its experience and global market needs, Etex Group consistently strives to improve its customers quality of living with ever more effective lightweight solutions whilst providing unrivalled customer service.

Results

Embracing RTV has enabled Etex Group to strengthen its existing and future customer relationships, resulting in highly satisfied customers who benefit from improved operations, communication and customer service levels.

“We’re seeing that our customers have a better perception of us as a professional organisation – that’s a certainty.”

Ian Mears

Etex Group Business Process Manager – Transport & Warehousing

Alongside this, Etex Group now benefits from less phone calling, resulting in more proactivity, both of which feed into the success of the project as a whole. Having communications around shipment ETA's allows Etex Group to strike a balance between calls focussing on operational support and building new customer relationships. Etex Group can now focus on more proactive activities, such as providing exceptional customer service, rather than passive activities such as tedious check calls and manual data input.



Sixfold solution helps carriers with their onboarding journey to ensure that Etex Group can get the most out of its RTV offering.

Working with Sixfold by Transporeon

Etex Group was provided with support throughout all the stages of the project, as well as ongoing support. In the initial stages of the project, support was more technical-heavy which then, based on the method of implementation, shifted to a prioritisation of customer service. This was primarily because Etex Group's carriers needed the most support with onboarding – something which Etex Group was very pleased with.

“There’s very little technically that we need to do. The real support then comes towards our carriers because there’s a technical aspect for them,” says Ian Mears, “and then there’s the other as-

pect of this which is them remembering at each stage to allocate a number plate for their truck when it comes to load – this is especially important because that is the information that enables us to use the functionality of track and trace.”

Mears explains that “if you’re a carrier using this track and trace functionality, there’s a term that comes up frequently, “we have technical difficulties” – what this really means is that someone has forgotten to input a licence plate into the tool.”

Etex Group found that it particularly benefited from having the support of the Sixfold by Transporeon team when it came to helping its carriers with their onboarding journey to ensure that Etex Group can get the most out of its RTV of-

fering. “This ability for us to, at the rollout stage, to have somebody from Sixfold by Transporeon ringing our carriers regularly, talking to them and analysing their behaviour, then coming back to us, is making the solution work,” says Ian Mears.

Working together on the project and maintaining consistency has been instrumental for its successes. For example, Sixfold by Transporeon’s support is helping Etex to address further issues such as re-subcontracting and cross-docking, which complicates things as it requires an additional part of the journey to be connected. Sixfold by Transporeon’s consistent support in this area has enabled Etex Group to keep on top of this. “Consistency of approach from both sides – both Sixfold by Transporeon and my side having a close working relationship and keeping a consistent approach towards making these things work and happen, makes this project work,” says Ian Mears.

Sixfold by Transporeon also offers further support via user groups, allowing access to seminars on various topics within logistics and distribution, including RTV. “It’s very useful for me, and keeps me abreast of what is happening within the industry and best practices,” says Ian Mears. “This is particularly useful as a lot of the information we gather is from a haulier and will often be from their viewpoint of what is going on in the industry as opposed to having a general overview – and of course, success stories and seminars relating to RTV, is all very relevant to us too.”

“We are very happy with the support we have been given by Sixfold by Transporeon – not just related to this project but on wider usage we are very pleased with the attention to detail and consistency the Transporeon brings to all our projects. We are very much a long-term partner. We are also very happy with interactivity with Transporeon, and that’s not just the service they provide us, but also the service they’re providing towards our carriers.”

Ian Mears
Etex Group Business Process Manager – Transport & Warehousing

Next steps

Etex Group intends to continue to expand its presence across the globe and, with it, its RTV offering. Likewise, it sees further opportunity for RTV beyond its current use – for example, within real time yard management. “We’re seeing more and more possibilities for the management of our yard by the RTV functionality,” says Ian Mears. “Because with the functionality of real-time yard management, the fact that we can track trucks arriving in our locations, further enhances this type of functionality.” Etex Group is also looking into the use of RTV capabilities within its track and trace offering to provide a RTV enabled sign on glass functionality further down the line. “But overall, keeping a consistent approach and to keep moving forward, making sure that the roll-outs happen, is all very important,” says Ian Mears.

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