

## CASE STUDY: **EDIFY AUTOMATES OPEN ENROLLMENT AT OLIN CORPORATION**

### BACKGROUND:

#### **Olin Corporation**

Olin Corporation, headquartered in Norwalk, Connecticut, is a diversified Fortune 500 company with annual sales of approximately \$2.6 billion and over 11,000 employees in 50 locations worldwide. Chlor Alkali Products Division, one of five divisions in Olin, produces chlorine, caustic soda, sodium hydrosulfite and bleach. It employs approximately 1,400 people and generates some \$550 million in gross annual sales. The division has four American sites, located in New York, Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama, and a plant in Brazil.

### CHALLENGE:

#### **Cost Savings, Greater Efficiency**

Olin's Chlor Alkali Products Division wanted to automate tasks in Human Resources to reduce costs and allow the HR staff to focus more on organization and culture change instead of on task-oriented services. Marianne Troast, Human Resources Systems Analyst, initially sought a Web-based solution for four major activities: employee profiles, open benefits enrollment, electronic paystubs, and a variable compensation bonus program. Previously, for an address change, an employee had to fill out a paper form and send it to HR, where a staff member manually entered the data. "If someone's writing was difficult to read, data could be entered incorrectly, or the data entry person could mistype an entry," says Troast. "Who knows their own data better than an employee? Essentially our goal was to get rid of paper as much as possible, to save costs and obtain cleaner data," says Troast.

### SOLUTION:

#### **Edify's Flexibility and Ease of Use**

In the search for a self service solution, Troast considered a number of factors. "Because of our

PeopleSoft system, we wanted a PeopleSoft partner: a company with flexibility with the phone, fax, web, and e-mail. We needed to be able to make changes easily. And the ease of programming was really important," she adds. Three vendors were initially considered, one of them Edify. One firm dropped out early because of company fiscal uncertainty, and another did not offer enough flexibility in terms of delivery methods. "We went to a bank in North Carolina and were shown how easy it was to create an application with Edify," says Troast. "Edify was the clear winner."

### IMPLEMENTATION:

#### **Edify Delivers Employee Self Service**

With the Edify implementation, Olin's Chlor Alkali Products Division now has three major Web-based self service applications: open

benefits enrollment, a variable compensation bonus program, and the employee personal information system. And the company no longer issues paper paystubs. The division has a PC literacy program in which every employee is given a PC for home use, and kiosks are available in the plants, so that employees can access the self service system at any time.

*"Edify was the clear winner. . . Our HR staff can become more focused on helping to implement the business strategy."*

*-Marianne Troast,  
Human Resources Systems Analyst*

"For open enrollment, we used to do a mass mailing to 1,300 employees of six pages, three of which had to be mailed back to HR in order for data to be entered," says Troast. "It took five days for seven representatives to do all that in the last two weeks of the year—that equals 35 people days just spent on data entry. Now with the Edify self service system, we see it as a total of five days of labor, and we are not spending dollars mailing out open enrollment packets. We saved a month's effort, both time and money."

Implementation of Web-based self service for the variable compensation bonus program has



eliminated a significant amount of work for both Olin HR staff and Olin managers. In past years, the HR staff sent spreadsheets to all managers, who filled them in

and returned them. The HR staff then had to spend many hours to manually combine the spreadsheets to produce a report. "Now the managers enter the data on the Web, and it's all gathered in one place—I produce a report in 10 minutes," Troast says. "And it's much easier for the managers: just point and click, and they're done."

Olin's self service system now offers retrieval of information for employees to review: benefits, personal data, paychecks, W-4 and other pay data. The most frequently accessed items are electronic paystubs, vacation balances, and personal data (name, address, dependents, etc.). "When we initiated the self service program, employees saw misspellings, wrong birthdates, a son listed as a daughter, and so forth, and could request that these errors be corrected, so we are ending up with much more accurate employee data," Troast comments. "Our ultimate objective is to avoid two or three hand-offs of information involved in database entry, so that people are able to maintain the accuracy of their data. So when we upgrade our PeopleSoft system next year, employees will be able to update the data themselves."

All application development is in-house, and Troast is in the process of implementing a phone application for an Information Line. This IVR application was created to consolidate the company's many 1-800 numbers, along with performing Employment Verification and Benefit Verification. A caller will be transferred to the 800 number option selected. This application was created to simplify an employee's access to various third-party employee information.

**BENEFITS:**

***Reaping the Rewards: Data Accuracy, Employee Satisfaction, Lower Costs***

Olin's Chlor Alkali Products Division is seeing major benefits from the Edify system, particularly in cost



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savings and verification of data. "We can spend our time doing what our division is supposed to be doing: making chlorine, not checking data," says Troast. "Our HR staff can become more focused on helping to implement the business strategy."

She adds that the system has been well received. "Each person can see what data is being maintained on them: who their dependents and beneficiaries of record are, and what address is showing for their emergency contacts. In the past we've found that information doesn't get updated if people move or get divorced, so it gives them a comfort level to be able to see the information online," Troast says. For the most popular application, electronic paystubs, information is available on the self service system three days before employees would receive a paper paystub through the mail at home. "They've figured out when it comes up on the Web, and we can see it being hit as soon as the information is available for each pay period."

"Our employee activity shows that the Edify system is getting hit around the clock, 24 hours a day, and traffic will definitely increase," says Troast. "In '98, we will be doing a time and attendance application for many operations employees in order to track hours worked and other activity-based costs. Also, we'll be providing the update capability for personal information, along with an interface with individual 401(k) employee accounts. And, as we phase in SAP integration, we'll see some opportunities to use self service in the manufacturing area. We keep looking at automating more and more activities, and we find ourselves saying, 'OK, this was successful—what else can we use Edify to do?'"

**Technical Summary**

Database: SQL Server  
HR System: PeopleSoft Release 5.12  
(future interface with SAP)

**Applications Summary**

Open Enrollment  
Employee Information  
Variable Compensation Bonus Program  
Electronic Paystub  
Information Line

**Media**

Web  
Telephone (IVR)