

Keeping the shelves well-stocked at Continente

The Portuguese retail giant implemented Fenestrae Faxination Server to optimize its IT infrastructure, thereby eliminating critical bottlenecks in real-time communications



Industry:

Retail

Company:

Continente

Challenges:

- High volume of faxes
- Poor system integration
- Performance issues

Solution:

Fenestrae Faxination Server

Benefits:

- Compatible with Retek
- Robust auditing capabilities for order management
- Fault-tolerant fax server precludes downtime



Fenestrae Faxination Server currently processes more than 60,000 purchase orders a month. "The system runs so smoothly that you tend to forget that it is there. It is a worry-free solution".

Jorge Armino Silva, IT Department

The company

Continente is part of the Sonae conglomerate, one of the leading players in food and non-food retail in Portugal. Active in sporting goods, apparel, consumer electronics, and appliances, Sonae is the largest private employer in Portugal, with more than 43,000 employees. Continente was the first chain of hypermarkets in Portugal and remains a benchmark in the food retail sector in the country. It has more than 180 stores across the country.

The Challenge

At Continente, upwards of 60,000 purchase orders per month are sent by fax. Like many large retail organizations, the Portuguese supermarket chain is highly dependent on the fax for purchasing and internal communications. Up until five years ago, it used a custom-built application that was increasingly difficult to maintain, was not integrated with organization's IT systems, and offered poor performance, causing unacceptable delays. Placing orders and communicating with logistics centers had effectively become a manual process again.

Continente realized it needed to replace the existing system. During the selection process, a number of key criteria stood out:

- Fully-automated operation
- Modular integration
- IT Integration with MS Biztalk, Oracle, and Retek
- Remote monitoring
- Central logging

The Solution

As Jorge Armindo Silva, in Continente's IT department, explains, the Fenestrae Faxination Server met all the requirements and offered additional scope for future enhancements. "It was," he says, "a short and painless migration project. Faxination Server was deployed across the organization within a week, thanks in part to excellent services provided by a local Fenestrae ISV partner."

Continente uses the Retek system to streamline and integrate all aspects of the retail business, such as merchandising, stock management and ordering. Retek tracks all stock movements. An 'understock limit' will automatically trigger a re-stock order which is processed by Faxination Server without any human intervention. Similarly, when outlets need to restock merchandise, orders are triggered via Microsoft BizTalk, with the purchase orders faxed to the corresponding suppliers in a matter of seconds. The whole process is monitored and records are synchronized to Oracle Financials for auditing and compliance.

"Continente choose Fenestrae because we needed a scalable system," explains Jorge. "We were also able to integrate it easily into Retek." It is also important for the supermarket chain to have central logging of purchase orders to ensure auditability, something Fenestrae facilitates, he says.

In 2012, Sonae decided to virtualize and consolidate the IT infrastructure within Optimus Telecomunicações, its retail telecommunications group. The objective was to minimize IT operational costs by reducing hardware maintenance costs. It was possible to remove fax cards and fax machines, saving space, money, and administrative effort. By relying on a

fault-tolerant Faxination Server, Continente and Optimus also eliminated potential downtime, another key factor in the requisites of the fast-moving retail world.

"We were able to control and eliminate potential points of failure across both organizations with a single fault-tolerant system," explains Jorge. "With virtually no human intervention required, we can quantify the real benefits for our business. This is really important for any IT project." Fenestrae Faxination Server currently processes more than 60,000 purchase orders a month. "The system runs so smoothly that you tend to forget that it is there," he observes. "It is a worry-free solution".

Following its successful integration within logistics, Fenestrae is now deployed in other departments, including the helpdesk, the administration and the secretariat, as well as the IT department itself, for both inbound and outbound fax messaging in combination with Microsoft Outlook.

Future plans

Continente is currently evaluating Fenestrae's Udocx for importing documents into Microsoft SharePoint. Udocx is a cloud-based service for scanning documents directly to business software, such as SharePoint, Google Apps, and Office 365. A complete document capturing and processing solution allowing paper documents to be turned into fully digitized, searchable files, saved at the required location in the business application of your choice. The service can be used in conjunction with all major brands of multi-functional printers and desktop scanners.

About Fenestrae®

Fenestrae®, founded in 1990, is a global provider of innovative solutions that help organizations improve agility and reduce costs by eliminating paper from key business processes. Fenestrae's suite of flagship products consists of Udocx® and the Faxination® Server. The company has offices in The Netherlands (HQ), US, Germany, Spain and Hong Kong. It serves over 9000 customers in more than 40 countries.

Fenestrae Headquarters

Loire 198

2491 AM Den Haag

The Netherlands

Tel: +31 703015100

Email: info@fenestrae.com

www.fenestrae.com