

# Wells & Young's standardizes on LANSA Composer



Wells and Young's Brewing Company is the U.K.'s largest privately owned brewery and a leader in cask beer and premium lager. The company's portfolio includes some of the U.K.'s best loved beers and premium lagers, including Wells Bombardier, Young's and Courage, Red Stripe and Corona Extra. Wells and Young's is standardizing on using LANSA Composer for its EDI communication with external parties, as well as for establishing a formal process for exchanging customer product information between its System21 ERP implementation and various other internal systems.

**Phil Bly**, Head of IT at Wells and Young's Brewing Company, says, "With LANSA Composer we now have a toolset that enables us to do native EDIAS2 transmissions directly to our distributor. From an IT point of view that gives us total end-to-end visibility. We didn't have to hire an EDI specialist and managed to deliver the solution in just over eight weeks. The process is now far more efficient."

## Too Many Links in the Chain

Wells and Young's beers are brewed using techniques over a hundred years old, but in one of the country's most modern breweries. Wells and Young's Brewing Company was formed in 2006 from the brewing and brands divisions of Charles Wells Ltd (based in Bedford) and Young and Co plc (based in Wandsworth), to form Britain's largest private brewery.

The high profile merger gave the company an unrivalled portfolio of cask beer and premium bottled ale to specialty premium lagers, including two of the fastest growing national brands, Young's Bitter and Wells Bombardier. In 2007, the company acquired the iconic Courage portfolio of beers.

Wells and Young's is operated as an independent company and both Young's and Charles Wells continue to operate their pub estates independently of each other.

"The large volume of orders and deliveries of the merged organization required a change in logistical procedures," explains Bly. "Soon after the merge we started a program to outsource our secondary deliveries (pubs) and primary deliveries (wholesalers and retail chains). A Blue Chip logistics company was chosen to initially take on the secondary deliveries for what were previously the Young's deliveries in the London area. This external service was then extended to cover the primary operation and finally in 2009 the secondary deliveries for Wells and Young's Bedford operation.

"So our total distribution has gone to a single third party," comments Bly. "From a systems point of view, this meant that we had to feed all the order information to our distribution partner. Previously we did this by extracting order information from our System21 into a flat pseudo EDI file, which we transmitted to our message broker. The broker would translate our pseudo EDI file to proper EDI transactions and transmit these via another VAN (Value Added Network) to our distribution partner."

## "Efficient EDI communication is critical in getting product on time to our customers."

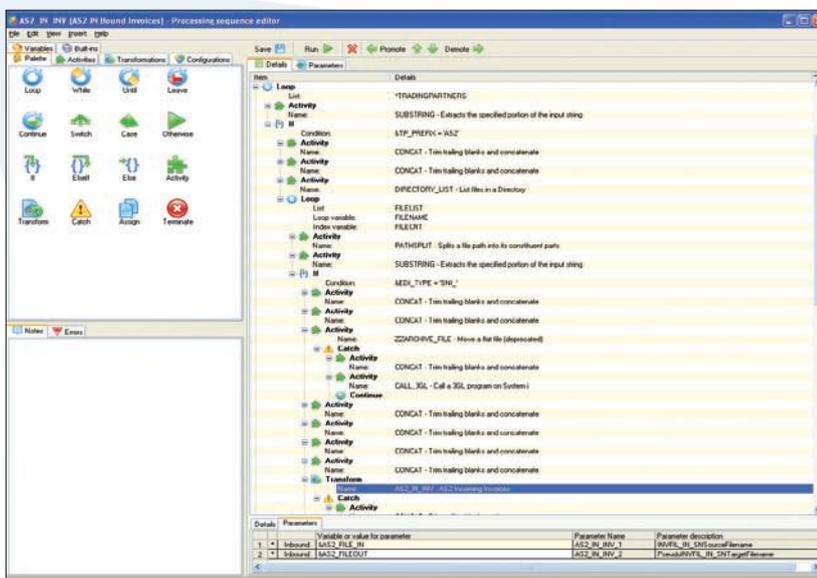
"With our large volume of data and the utilization of a message broker and VAN, the EDI transmission became quite expensive. The added EDI volume for our primary and Bedford based secondary deliveries would have pushed up transmission costs even further. So, that was a good driver to make changes to the EDI process."

"But of equal importance to us was that we had no end-to-end visibility. If something didn't work as expected after the file had left Wells and Young's, we didn't know where it went wrong. The orders could be stuck either with our message broker, they could be stuck at the second VAN or maybe our distribution partner had never processed them. There were just too many links in the chain."

There was also a timing issue, according to Bly. "After each transmission we had to wait for an acknowledgement to come back from our distribution partner before the next batch of orders could be sent. The process of sending out a batch of orders and waiting for the acknowledgement could take up to an hour, because of the multiple steps and parties involved."

"If we encounter data or transmission problems, especially at the end of the day, distribution costs could escalate. The standard industry procedure is to place an order on day one and receive the goods on day three. If one day is lost because of EDI problems, then the distributor has effectively been given one day's less notice, which has a cost implication."

"Efficient EDI communication with our distributor is critical in getting product on



The processing sequence editor made it easy to define business activities – such as AS2 inbound invoices – without any coding.

time to our customers, so we started to look for a solution that let us speedup the process and give us better visibility," explains Bly. "We wanted a toolset that would enable us to do native EDI transmissions with reusable components directly from Wells and Young's, rather than going through a VAN."

### Meeting the Deadline

"Initially we looked at a specific EDI software package. It was good at generating EDI, but it was too complex and didn't solve some of the problems we had. We needed an AS2 solution, as well as mapping and translation into the TRADACOMS format." Bly was already aware of some of the LANSA tools and with further research he became aware of the LANSA Composer product.

"LANSA Composer's AS2 solution with its facility to map to EDI formats like TRADACOMS gave us exactly what we needed," says Bly.

"From the moment of purchase we had a tight deadline of just under 12 weeks. Once the dates had been set for changing over the distribution operation it was critical that the IT solution was delivered on schedule. Using the LANSA Composer software we managed to deliver and implement the solution on time."

"From an implementation point of view, everything went smoothly. The few small issues we had were fixed very quickly. Also, the solution was easy to integrate with our RPG-based Sytem21 implementation."

"We didn't have to hire an EDI specialist. We delivered the solution with internal resources using Composer's mapping facility and Altova's data map examples for TRADACOMS. We now have a mechanism in place to take the raw data as we extract it out of System21 and compose that into the required EDI format and transmit that using AS2."

### End-to-End Visibility

"We achieved the budget savings that we were looking for. We save significantly in transmission costs by sending orders directly to our distribution partner and not having to use a VAN service. There are other savings and efficiencies as well," continues Bly.

"The cycle of sending our orders to our distribution partner and receiving their acknowledgment back now takes an average of 10 minutes, rather than the 40 to 60 minutes it took previously."



Phil Bly (middle) with the LANSA Composer project team Colin Lapping and Karen Rich.

### "We didn't have to hire an EDI specialist."

"Those 'end of the day' pressure situations where we cannot get our orders through before 6:00 pm have disappeared, together with the penalties that apply in those situations. We have good control over what we are sending and get a quick turnaround."

"From an IT point of view we now have total visibility," continues Bly. "We know the exact status of each transmission and where our orders are at. In case of any delays, it's between us and our distribution partner."

After implementing the initial EDI solution, Bly implemented several other EDI solutions with other partners, also using LANSA Composer. "LANSA Composer is becoming our standard middleware for any external communication and internal ETL (Extract, Transform and Load) solutions."

"Because LANSA Composer let's us work at a high level, the solutions we have created seem all very similar from a technical point of view, even though some of them had a completely different EDI protocol underneath."

### A Common Platform

Bly and his team are in the process of re-engineering EDI solutions that were put in place before they had LANSA, both

for inbound and outbound EDI. "We are working towards making LANSA Composer our common platform for all inbound and outbound EDI communication," says Bly.

In the near future Wells and Young's are also going to use LANSA Composer for data integration between various internal systems. For example, Bly wants to establish a formal process for managing customer product information between Wells and Young's System21 and Aurora ERP solutions, Kelros CRM, Lotus Notes and an in-house developed Enterprise Information System.

"We are standardizing on using LANSA Composer as the glue between our System21 ERP and formal communications with other systems," says Bly.

Standardizing on LANSA Composer will not remain restricted to the IBM i platform either, as Bly is in the process of using the same LANSA Composer technology in Windows and SQL Server based environments as well.

Bly envisions an IT environment where Wells and Young's core business activity is managed mostly with IBM i-based systems, but where Windows and SQL server-based solutions play an increasing role.

"System integration between the IBM i and Windows-based solutions is of importance and LANSA plays a big role in that as well," concludes Bly. ■

### COMPANY AND SYSTEM INFORMATION

- Wells and Young's Brewing Company is the U.K.'s largest private brewery. All of the Wells and Young's beers are brewed with the accredited natural mineral water from the brewery's very own well, sunk over 100 years ago. Wells & Young's brews and distributes some of the U.K.'s favorite ale brands and some of the world's most famous lager beers, including: Bombardier, Young's, Courage, Red Stripe, Corona Extra and Estrella Damm. For more information visit [www.wellsandyoung.co.uk](http://www.wellsandyoung.co.uk)