



Babelway has helped Vandeputte take control of B2B integration projects and save 80% of the costs of the old system

Benjamin Nuttin, 30, is one of 2 computer programmers who run the company's IT department. He is the person responsible for rolling out Babelway at Vandeputte.

VandeputteGroup is a family company founded in 1887. The group employs around 250 people in 2 distinct entities: SOAP and OLEO. SOAP designs and produces liquid household cleaning products and textile care products for large retailers and maintenance professionals. OLEO processes linseed to produce high-quality oil using ultra-modern facilities but also respecting traditional processes. OLEO has a production capacity of 100,000 tons of raw linseed oil and exports all over the world.

Can you describe your situation before Babelway? What problems were you trying to solve?

We have been running EDI exchanges for a long time with our customers, mainly in France, but also in Spain, Portugal and Belgium.

We were running Axapta version 3 (which replaced our original AS400 infrastructure). At the same time as Axapta, we installed Synchrolink from Influe (now Generix) to process our B2B exchanges (mapping and transport). We had our EDI infrastructure in-house, on our own servers. Synchrolink, our EDI software, was managed and controlled by our external provider. Every time we needed a correction or a new message map we had to rely on our external provider to do it for us. The company was not particularly reactive, and the changes weren't always right first time, involving a lot of communication and re-working. It was particularly slow and cost us a lot, which was particularly frustrating.

We decided to upgrade to Axapta 2009, as a result of which, all message formats changed. We could either ask Influe/Generix to redesign all maps in Synchrolink, or install BizTalk as suggested by the Microsoft partner who carried out the Axapta migration.

When we were introduced to Babelway, we were given an opportunity to try another approach.

Why change? What expectations did you have of this new approach?

Carrefour was imposing short deadlines for creating new messages. We couldn't have met with their expectations with our set-up.

Carrefour introduced Babelway to us and we thought it was an option worth trying out. As it didn't involve any set-up costs, we could even have used it exclusively for Carrefour and carried on as we were for everything else.



What Babelway was proposing was the exact opposite of what we knew. Instead of running servers while the external provider created maps and ran exchanges, we would be creating our own maps and controlling our exchanges while Babelway would make sure the servers were up and running with up-to-date software.

In retrospect this makes so much more sense. We know what we need so we don't have to spend all that time explaining it to an external partner.

After the Carrefour experiment, we carried out a thorough analysis of our options:

- We ruled out Influe/Generix based on the lack of confidence we had in their service
- Microsoft BizTalk involved a very high upfront investment that we couldn't justify.
- Babelway clearly came out on top of the various options, it was the best solution. Plus, our Microsoft Axapta partner was a Babelway partner too.

Tell us about the installation/migration project? How did you organise it?

We spent one day at the Babel Academy, organised together with Carrefour and focused on sending e-invoices to Carrefour. By the end of the day, we already had a full end-to-end integration in place with a successful test invoice. The next day, we got final approval. The next week, we were running live exchanges with Carrefour.

We decided that we would transfer all flows once Axapta 2009 was fully in place. This represents 12 order messages, 2 DESADV messages and 3 invoice messages.

“What Babelway was proposing was the exact opposite of what we knew: no software, but full control. In retrospect, this makes so much more sense”

What sort of investment and costs did this entail? How would you compare it with other alternatives?

The only investment we made was the cost of the training at the Babel Academy. We didn't buy Babelway's services, we did it ourselves. It took me about 2 weeks overall, maybe 3 but I was not that familiar with Babelway. I had to learn XML and XPath and I turned to the Babelway helpdesk for occasional support. I have to say how helpful Babelway support is. It was amazing how quickly I was getting answers to my questions. Sometimes even at all hours of day and night.

In terms of our operational costs, we kept to our operations budget. We saved the cost of one internal server and the Babelway costs didn't outweigh what we saved in operations.

Contacts: Benjamin Nuttin,
Vandeputte
Boulevard Industriel 120
B-7700 – MOUSCRON BELGIUM
Tel: +32 56 859 720

What were the results and the benefits of the project?

We have cut out external mapping costs and increased the level of control we have. Since we were in charge of the project, we could control deadlines with our partners.

We learned a lot during test phases and realised how much more efficiently we could organise things. Instead of there being 3 parties involved, we could deal directly with our partners.

Overall, we changed our mindset when it came to EDI. Before it was more of a necessary evil, whereas now it's a complementary service that we'll automatically offer all our suppliers and customers. We want to turn it into a competitive advantage.

If you had to do it again, what would you do differently?

We'd roll it out much faster

What would you recommend to companies considering extending/migrating EDI?

Babelway costs are linked to the volume of exchanges, so companies should analyse these costs based on their own volumes.

We calculated internally that the cost of running the old system for one year would pay for us to use Babelway for 5 years. Babelway costs a fifth of what we were paying before.

Babelway
Chemin du Cyclotron, 6
B-1348 – LOUVAIN-LA-NEUVE BELGIUM
Tel: +32 10 390 013
www.babelway.com