

## British American Tobacco: IT for exporters is more than document printing...

**British American Tobacco required a comprehensive export solution - software that can be integrated with SAP R/3 and handle document creation smoothly and seamlessly. "Previously we produced our export and despatch documentation using our BPCS legacy system in the UK and various other PC based packages in other European countries," recalls Iain Sclanders, Business Analyst in British American Tobacco.**

"The implementation of SAP R/3 required a re-evaluation of our interface strategy. Particularly as we were tasked with implementing SAP across a number of sites within Europe, a flexible solution meeting diverse requirements was therefore of paramount importance".

British American Tobacco's specification called for foreign trade software with the ability to adjust to the country-specific export requirements of its diverse customers. They identified the ASSIST4-system from AEB Stuttgart/Germany - the German market leader in the area of export and despatch solutions.

British American Tobacco's Customer Service Department places high priority on fast and reliable handling and shipping of customer orders. Processing 2000 consignments per month is a challenge, especially when staff are dealing with varied issues such as excise regimes, hazardous goods and Letters of Credit. ASSIST4 specialised export modules meet all these challenges.

"Another requirement was the seamless integration with R/3," continues Iain. "British American Tobacco processes all commercial transactions in SAP. Therefore we have an intensive and complex data exchange between R/3 and the export software." In order to manage and log the data transfers with R/3, British American Tobacco, uses an integrated module called ASSIST4 Communication (ACMS). ACMS picks up the delivery and billing data from R/3 and submits it to ASSIST4 for document creation.

British American Tobacco decided to use two R/3 interface documents for each shipment. The first transfer, containing the delivery data, is the basis for the production of the customs and despatch documents. The second transfer, after the posting of the invoice within SAP, carries the billing data for the creation of the commercial invoice.

ACMS also manages the decentralised access to the shared database of two UK factory sites: Southampton and Corby as well as separate ASSIST4 implementations connected to the same instance of SAP R/3 elsewhere in Northern Europe.

"IT for exporters is more than document printing", summarises Iain. "Within this project, British American Tobacco focussed on reliable and fast document creation - a key feature of AEB's intelligent ASSIST4 applications".

Are new technologies a guarantee for success? Iain considers: "IT can only be a tool that supports the people who are responsible for the business process. Though, as in this case with ASSIST4, when the software is stable and complimentary to SAP R/3, the users are able to concentrate on improving customer service levels rather than worrying about time consuming adjustments to export documents'.

British American Tobacco is headquartered in London. It has active businesses in more than 180 countries, manufacturing facilities in over 100 countries, and has a total brand portfolio, which comprises over 320 brands.