PostNL Delivers Superior Service with Master Data Management

30–40
percent savings on MDM costs

FEWER
invoice errors

SHIFT
in employee culture based on the new MDM solution

PostNL handles over one million parcels and eight million postal items per day for almost nine million addresses in the Netherlands alone. The company is "the indispensable link between senders and receivers—connecting the physical and digital world."

Challenge

With the explosive growth in e-commerce and customer demand, PostNL needed to transform into a customer-centric logistics company—predicated on increasing its data quality, gaining insights into customer preferences, and achieving better data management processes. As a newly transformed digital logistics company, it would develop new products, identify market needs, comply with regulatory requirements, and improve business processes.

According to Thijs Bult, head of data foundation and governance, "Data quality determines everything we do, which is why we invest a lot of time, money, and effort. Around 120 people help organize our data management. However, it has to be flexible. We wanted to make changes to the MDM applications ourselves quickly and easily. And we wanted to keep a grip on costs."

It was crucial for PostNL to improve data management and quality for customers and partners for a successful digital transformation. Customer profiles were not always complete and some customer data was duplicated throughout systems, which led to inefficiency and unnecessary costs.

PostNL

PostNL, the largest postal and parcel service in the Netherlands and Belgium, is at the heart of Dutch society. Its more than 40,000 employees deliver mail as sustainably as possible, covering many kilometers on foot or by electric bicycle and leveraging innovative city logistics, cleaner fuels, and light electric freight vehicles.

Partner Spotlight: Systemation

Systemation helps customers successfully implement master data, reference data, and metadata solutions based on TIBCO EBX software. As a dedicated EBX partner for over 10 years, the seasoned implementation consultants at Systemation help customers boost their data management journey with best practices, a development accelerator framework, and a continuous deployment framework.

Learn more:
systemation.nl
tibco.com/partners/systemation

In addition, PostNL had adopted a cloud strategy and, by extension, a rationalization of the IT landscape. Company data first had to be cleaned before migrating it to the new environments, the starting point for a solid data foundation. To become the preferred delivery service for customers, the company started looking for a data management platform that could increase its data quality and accelerate data science initiatives.

Transformation

With guidance from TIBCO Silver Partner Systemation, PostNL chose TIBCO master data management solutions to fuel data-driven insights. These solutions allow it to predict postal supply and demand more accurately—and better regulate logistics peaks, like the holiday season. This ability translates to better ordering, payment, and delivery experiences for customers.

To get started, Systemation supported PostNL with implementation of its master data management solution through tool selection, design, implementation, training, resourcing, advice, and guidance. After choosing TIBCO EBX MDM, the focus was on data modeling. Systemation's powerful EBX Development Accelerator and Automated Deployment Framework fully supported PostNL's automated production of MDM applications.

According to Jaap Franse, founder and CEO of Systemation, "We are proud of our role in supporting PostNL in its transformation to becoming a logistic tech company. Working with the PostNL team to strengthen data management capabilities and core logistic processes by implementing TIBCO EBX software has been very rewarding."

As part of the framework, Systemation migrated PostNL's current MDM application to the new platform with added master data management capabilities. The new data repositories are now domain-related data collections used by multiple applications throughout the organization. Currently, eight repositories are in various stages of migration or implementation with more planned.

"Systemation's in-depth knowledge of data, the functionality of EBX MDM, plus the experience with such complex implementations are of great added value. Thanks to their expertise and their practical approach, we have made great strides in improving our MDM. And it's just nice to have a local partner and to know the context of your company," says Bult.

All this work helped PostNL develop a federal model. Bult explains, "We believe this model is crucial for a data-driven organization because it transfers ownership of the data to the business in a decentralized manner. In our view, data ownership must have a relationship with the process where the object is created and recorded. The Data Management Organizations are therefore positioned close to the data owner."

“You can tell that EBX software is designed for ease of use with a user interface that focuses on the needs of users such as data stewards. That speeds up adoption and the motivation to get and keep the data in order.”

— Thijs Bult, Head of Data Foundation and Governance

Benefits

Thanks to Systemation and TIBCO, PostNL is meeting all its transformation goals with the new platform. According to Bult, “The choice for TIBCO EBX software was a no-brainer from a cost point of view. With TIBCO’s solution, we save 30 to 40 percent on MDM technology costs. This involves hundreds of thousands of euros per year.”

PostNL’s new solution meets the company’s functional requirements of data stewardship, data entry, and workflow. Additionally, the platform’s licensing model does not create unforeseen costs and can handle rapidly growing data volumes

Furthermore, the flexible and agile platform makes master, reference, and metadata management much easier for end-users, sparking a cultural shift for employees. Invoices have fewer errors, products are simplified, and processes are streamlined. Most importantly, running a new update or release is as easy as a push of a button. After that, everything works just as it should. Bult says, “We are already seeing the positive effects of the new solution. Users are excited about the possibilities with data and want more with it.”

The platform’s unique, fully-configurable approach eliminates the need for time-consuming, costly, and unmanageable development projects. PostNL reports that the use of a Systemation-developed and TIBCO-certified framework was the key to its transformation—significantly accelerating the platform’s application. Bult says, “You can tell that EBX software is designed for ease of use with a user interface that focuses on the needs of users such as data stewards. That speeds up adoption and the motivation to get and keep the data in order.”

Looking to the future, PostNL wants to create a dedicated devOps team for the MDM platform and build data engineering knowledge. More and more applications will be connected to the EBX platform with additional capabilities for managing transactional data. From there, the opportunities are limitless. Streamlined postal services and increased data management were made possible by Systemation and TIBCO.

Brand clarification: TIBCO EBX is now EBX® and is part of ON EBX™, rather than the TIBCO® business unit. TIBCO® and ON EBX™ are business units of Cloud Software Group. References to TIBCO in this case study reflect the branding in use at the time of original publication.

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