Innovation Profile

Innovations with AgGateway Standards
AgVantage Software Helps Its Customers Become More Efficient

Background

AgVantage Software, Inc., an employee-owned software company, has been providing agricultural software to agricultural retail suppliers and grain companies for over 40 years. AgVantage has staff located in Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and Washington.

AgVantage customers seek to streamline the process of receiving products, pricing and reporting sales.

Challenges

AgVantage has a very diverse customer base. They all need to connect to different suppliers who each have their own independent formats for sending and receiving information. These suppliers also have their own product IDs that change frequently as new products come to market and older products are removed. AgVantage also has limited financial resources and time, so we need to decide where to spend our software resources.

Solution with AgGateway Standards

AgVantage has a program called Customer Driven Development, whereby we program the features that our customers decide are the most important. Our seed customers all voted for us to get involved in eCommerce to help them with the many challenges seed provides.

AgVantage joined AgGateway’s Seed Connectivity II Project in 2012. Joining with AgGateway gave AgVantage the information needed to create interfaces with all the major seed manufacturers. It also gave AgVantage access to people at those manufacturers to work with as we bring more and more AgVantage clients into the eConnectivity world. AgVantage connected with AgGateway’s Ag Industry Identification System (AGIIS) database, allowing customers to pull down new products; now they can choose to add those products to their own databases with the click of a button.

AgGateway Resources

- Ag Industry Identification System (AGIIS)
- Seed Connectivity Project

Key Points

- Huge Time Saver: Receiving electronic ship notices has saved each company a dramatic amount of time, because they do not need to hand-key any of the information into their servers.
- Accurate Inventory: Receiving the correct products and lot numbers makes their inventory systems much more accurate than it would be if the information was entered manually.
- Scanning System: We also implemented a scanning system as seed is dispatched. This confirms that the customer is receiving the correct seed and what lot numbers were delivered to the customer.
- Secures Seed Lot # Integrity: This is especially important if there is an issue with a certain lot of seed; we can quickly identify the growers who received that product.
As a result of our work and the use of AgGateway resources, the AgVantage seed inventory system allows users to see where all seed orders are in the process, from a seed plan, to order, to dispatch, to staged, to invoiced. The system allows drill-down into each step to see the growers and orders making up those amounts. It quickly points out where the user may be over-committed on a particular seed, to help them make substitution decisions.

Our newest undertaking is electronic ordering. This will send grower orders directly to the manufacturers, eliminating the need to manually enter those orders into the manufacturers’ systems. We will also true up our system to the manufacturer’s system with the retail order summary, to quickly and easily find and resolve discrepancies.

Future Plans
AgVantage Software is creating a similar process for fertilizer and chemicals. As customers have found the great time and accuracy savings with seed, they have asked us to implement an electronic ordering, receiving and invoicing system for fertilizer and chemicals with their major suppliers. While each interface requires a fair amount of time and expense to implement, AgVantage users see the benefits and savings each and every day after they have it implemented. No one wants to go back to the way they used to do things!

“The result has been a definite improvement to our business. Seed department profitability is now contributing significantly to our company’s bottom line… We have seen a return-on-investment as high as 50 to 1 annually, just due to reducing shrink. It only takes about 10-to-12 bags of seed corn lost in a year to pay for the technology.”

- Randy Fry, Data Process and Information Systems Manager, Ceres Solutions

About AgGateway
AgGateway is a non-profit organization dedicated to the expanded use of information to maximize efficiency and productivity, promoting and enabling the industry's transition to digital agriculture. www.AgGateway.org

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