



Alcan Composites USA

Supporting sustainability in the back office



Rio Tinto is a leading international mining group headquartered in the UK, combining Rio Tinto plc, a London and NYSE listed company, and Rio Tinto Limited, which is listed on the Australian Securities Exchange. Rio Tinto's business is finding, mining, and processing mineral resources. Major products are aluminium, copper, diamonds, energy (coal and uranium), gold, industrial minerals, (borax, titanium dioxide, salt, talc) and iron ore. Activities

span the world but are strongly represented in Australia and North America with significant business in South America, Asia, Europe and southern Africa.

Alcan Composites, a part of Rio Tinto Alcan Engineered Products, employs 2700 persons in 22 locations in Europe, the Americas and Asia. It is active in manufacturing and commercializing lightweight multimaterial solutions for architecture, visual communication, transportation, industrial and wind energy markets. Alcan Composites USA products are used for the signs in large store displays in retail outlets such as Wal-Mart and Target. In addition, its solutions were used to create the Architectural/Building Cladding applications like the Epcot Center geodesic dome in Florida and the Clinton Presidential Library and Museum in Arkansas. Alcan Composites USA is the inventor of reputable brands such as FOME-COR®, SINTRA®, GATORFOAM®, and ALUCOBOND®. Alcan has been featured on the Dow Jones Sustainability World Index consecutively since 2003.

Kirk Jones is Director of IT and Karel Drastich is the Director of Strategic Planning and Sustainability responsible for the Alcan Composites USA internal "green" initiative.

Situation

Alcan Composites was issued a mandate by its executive team to create and implement a sustainability initiative aimed to reduce the company's carbon footprint. This green initiative included all processes of the business, both internal and external, that went into producing the products.

One area that required attention from the IT team in particular was the company's back office. The amount of paper used each day to process invoices and confirmation notices was alarmingly high.

"We took the obvious steps of reducing our energy consumption and using recyclable materials for our products, but there was no way we could really call ourselves a green company if we didn't do something to change the amount of paper we used," said Jones. "That said, we set out on a search for a solution that could help us eliminate the use of paper in our back office. We called it our internal e-sustainability initiative."

The Search

Alcan Composites USA uses a 10-year old version of SAP software, SAP 4.0B, to manage its customer relationship information. In a search for a solution to eliminate paper documents, its single requirement was that the technology integrate with its existing IT infrastructure.

Alcan Composites USA contacted TOPCALL (now Kofax), but quickly found it very expensive for what it provided and lacking correct interoperation with SAP 4.0B. Next, Alcan Composites' IT team followed up with Esker, a company advertised through an email from ASUG, an independent, not-for-profit organization of SAP customer companies and eligible third-party vendors.

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Kirk Jones ■ Director of IT ■ Alcan Composites USA



Working with Esker, we've established a set of best practices for internal green efficiency and know that looking ahead we will discover more ways to reduce our footprint even more through the elimination of paper.

Karel Drastich ▪ Director of Strategic Planning and Sustainability ▪ Alcan Composites USA

Solution: Esker Fax Services for SAP Applications

After an initial meeting, Esker realized Alcan Composites faced several specific integration requirements because of its older ERP solution, but knew that the team could integrate Esker technology with even the most obscure legacy ERP technologies, with a little customization work.

"Using some creative engineering, Esker implemented its Fax Services for SAP Connector — but instead of using it for fax communications, we use the solution for automatically emailing business documents," said Jones.

Most businesses seek automatic faxing when integrating Esker Fax Services for SAP Applications — but with Alcan, the technology was configured for automatic emailing. The result was a service fully integrated with Alcan's SAP application — without adding hardware or software.

With the Esker solution, Alcan no longer manually sends paper invoices. Instead, all documents are processed electronically. Customers who previously received documents from Alcan via postal mail or fax are now required to accept that information via email.

"We've experienced tremendous benefits since working with Esker," said Jones. "We have reduced costs because we no longer buy paper and the other materials associated with printing, we no longer spend money on postal mail delivery and overall, the accuracy of our order fulfillment has improved. We also no longer pay staff overtime for working extra hours to print, stuff and address invoices for postal mail delivery."

Alcan Composites USA processes about 75,000 sheets of paper invoices per year. After a calculation of the cost before the Esker solution — factoring labor, paper, envelope and postage cost — compared to the cost of using the Esker and SAP solutions together, Alcan has reported an annual savings of \$13,500.

"We've worked very hard to roll out this sustainability mandate across all departments of our company and hope that when people understand the progress we've made in reducing our carbon footprint, they will be inspired to do the same," said Drastich. "Working with Esker, we've established a set of best practices for internal green efficiency and know that looking ahead we will discover more ways to reduce our footprint even more through the elimination of paper."

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