CASE STUDIES: KOPPERS

Koppers, Inc. has a rich heritage in the world of manufacturing. Initially named "Koppers Company, Inc.", the business was established in 1912 when a German scientist developed an innovative new coke oven that economically preserved the by-products of the chemicals lost during the baking process. The company was logically head-quartered in Pittsburgh, PA, as it was the world leader in the steel industry at that time. In 1988, the Koppers Company, Inc. went through a management-led leveraged buy-out, and changed the name of the business to Koppers, Inc. in 2003. Koppers, Inc. is currently a global leader in the manufacturing of chemical and carbon materials and treated wood products, including aluminum, steel, and rubber. They are a leading provider for the railroad, electric, and communications industries.

Koppers, Inc. used to handle their Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) internally. Jim Buxton, the Director of IT for Koppers,Inc., recalled that "We were managing the EDI in-house, which put a lot of work on our staff. Our transactions were increasing significantly, and were going to continue to increase-our staff couldn't handle the workload."

After examining the costs of maintaining EDI in-house-the annual maintenance, the cost of hardware, the strain put on their staff-and comparing those costs to that of outsourcing, Koppers, Inc. knew that outsourcing their EDI would benefit their company both economically and temporally.

Innovate E-Commerce was already working with Koppers, Inc. on a Consulting level basis, so when the decision was made to outsource, Buxton stated "We already had a relationship built with Innovate E-Commerce, and they offered us a complete package, from mapping, to deliveries to trading partners, to the infrastructure in-between. All we had to do was supply the initial files."

Once Koppers, Inc. outsourced to Innovate E-Commerce, they experienced significant improvements. "All the benefits we anticipated were achieved," said Buxton. "We didn't have to worry if our files were getting delivered properly, Innovate's tracking and auditing system eliminated mis-shipments, our staff was freed up, our data was backed up, and we could readily achieve our timelines."

The entire EDI process for Koppers, Inc. sped up by working with Innovate E-Commerce. "The best part of working with Innovate is we are able to react to our customers' requirements quickly," stated Buxton. "We just have to do a little piece and the rest of the work with the trading partners etc. is taken on by Innovate. Our customers are set-up and going on their timelines much faster."

Innovate E-Commerce and Koppers, Inc. has established an excellent business relationship. "Koppers, Inc. is an excellent company to work with," said Karen Puchalsky, CEO of Innovate E-Commerce. "They are a part of Pittsburgh history, and as a Pittsburgh based company ourselves, we are thrilled to be working with them."