

## » OBO Bettermann

### The Company

OBO Bettermann (OBO), known as the market leader in the supply of innovative systems for electrical installation, has been developing and manufacturing quality products for more than 90 years. With a workforce of over 2000 people, the company now manufactures a comprehensive range of around 30,000 products at its three sites, generating annual sales of 250 million euro. OBO's extensive product portfolio, which is constantly being developed and adapted to technical advances, includes connection and fastening systems, lightning and fire protection systems, and cable support and routing systems.

### What's Critical

In collaboration with SSA Global, the Menden-based company designed a sophisticated indirect procurement solution to automate ordering procedures in its Purchasing department. This has made most order transactions much more efficient, cutting delivery times and delays to a minimum.

For OBO, the introduction of web-enabled procurement based on SSA® Procurement is the logical follow-on from the switching of key business processes to computer-aided solutions some years ago.

The company first implemented SSA ERP in conjunction with SSA Global. It then introduced SSA Procurement, a critical component of SSA Supplier Relationship Management, allowing all sites and cost centers to order consumables from predefined system suppliers electronically. Written orders are only required for items of capital expenditure. In terms of innovative sourcing systems, OBO is therefore at the head of its field.



### Find the Right Solution

Transactions which previously had to be laboriously processed by hand and sent by fax are now fully automated at OBO.

With the help of SSA Procurement, order requirements identified in SSA ERP are placed in a system mailbox on the web server. The supplier receives an email message at the same time. It processes the order in SSA Procurement and generates an order confirmation. Any changes to delivery dates, quantities and prices are entered by the supplier. This data is automatically updated in SSA ERP and reconciled with the order specifications. All order items are checked for conformity by the system, and buyers are only notified of any deviations for clarification.

The electronic process frees up purchasing staff from routine activities and eliminates sources of error. As Ortwin Kümper, IT Leader in charge of ERP and SRM applications at OBO, explains: "Now the buyer only receives deviation reports about orders for which the supplier has made changes."

According to Kümper, another major advantage of SSA Procurement is the greater transparency of the entire order processing system. All data is available to the supplier online for immediate processing and management. The supplier is responsible for quantity and schedule management on behalf of OBO Bettermann. This "Self-Service Look Up" function has done away with the entire delivery reminder system at OBO.

**"... the system results in significantly greater planning reliability for the various OBO production areas.**

Ortwin Kümper, IT Leader,  
OBO Bettermann

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The interactive Open Posts list shows the supplier the current status of the delivery in terms of quantity and scheduled delivery date. The supplier goes back to SSA ERP, where it can manage delivery schedules directly using the Open Posts list. These changes are again immediately reconciled with the order specifications and notified to the buyers in the event of delivery bottlenecks. Changes to OBO's requirements are notified to the supplier in the form of a purchase order change. The procedure corresponds to that for placing orders.

The suppliers connected to the system can also import order data directly into their own ERP system. In this way, "Suppliers become cooperation partners," Kümper says. Suppliers do not need to have special IT programs, just internet access. The system is simple and easy to use, so only half a day's training is necessary. All data is stored on a server protected by a state-of-the-art firewall system.

### Making it Pay

About 80 percent of all OBO purchase orders — corresponding to some 25,000 items per year — are now processed via SSA Procurement. All of its top suppliers have been integrated into the system. SSA Procurement dramatically reduces the length of the ordering and order confirmation processes. Previously, five to eight days were needed for a purchase order, including order processing. Now it takes an average of two hours.

Since most of the time-consuming manual tasks have been eliminated, two members of staff have been freed up from operational duties and moved into strategic purchasing. Kümper explains, "This development reflects the transformation of Purchasing to a largely strategic unit within the company."

The fact that the entire system is internet-based represents a further advantage: data can be accessed and processed from anywhere in the world.

Kümper continues, "We also profit from the fact that delivery problems are revealed very quickly and that the system results in significantly greater planning reliability for the various OBO production areas."

It is a stated objective and strategy to further develop e-business in the coming years. One project aimed at integrated invitation to tender and electronic contract negotiation has already begun, meaning that the entire procurement process at OBO will be switched to automated solutions over the next year.

### About SSA Global

SSA Global™ (NASDAQ: SSAG) is a leading provider of extended ERP solutions for manufacturing, distribution, retail, services and public organizations worldwide. In addition to core ERP applications, SSA Global offers a full range of integrated extension solutions including corporate performance management, customer relationship management, product lifecycle management, supply chain management and supplier relationship management. Headquartered in Chicago, SSA Global has 50 locations worldwide and its product offerings are used by approximately 13,000 active customers in over 90 countries. For additional information, visit the SSA Global web site at [www.ssaglobal.com](http://www.ssaglobal.com).

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