



Keeping trade flowing using an AS/2 gateway for Marston's PLC - Orion EDI Bureau

OVERVIEW

Marston's PLC is the UK's leading brewing and pub retailing business, operating over 1,400 pubs in the UK, and is the world's largest brewer of cask ale. Marston's PLC runs six breweries throughout the UK, and brews some of the UK's leading ale brands including Marston's Pedigree, Jennings, Banks's Bitter, Banks's Original, Mansfield Bitter, Brakspear and Wychwood.

BENEFITS

PathFinder provides Marston's PLC with a valuable cloud-based resource for SAAS (software as a service), providing on-demand mapping, profile and project management. The system additionally supports managed file transfer to and from multiple trading partners. A continuous program of releases and updates keeps pace with new developments in the field of EDI.

CHALLENGE

Many of Marston's customers had a need to exchange EDI data via the AS/2 protocol. Unlike previous methods of transferring batched data via a VAN (Value Added Network), AS/2 offers a real time exchange of data in both directions, and requires both incoming and outgoing connections to exchange files.



“Using Orion Consulting's flexible approach enables Marston's to respond to trading partner requests in a way that often exceeds their expectations. Orion work closely with us during the development and test phases of our projects and post-implementation, we receive excellent support from Orion.”

Phil Court
Head of Information Systems,
Marston's PLC



FULL CASE STUDY

Marston's PLC has recently completed a joint venture with the Carlsberg Group to form the Carlsberg Marston's Brewing Company, combining over 300 years of shared heritage and excellence and further enhancing their market presence. Marston's have worked with Orion Consulting for well over a decade, having migrated to Orion's PathFinder solution in 2006. This PathFinder solution now handles both traditional EDI requirements and other managed file transfers.

In preference to allowing direct connections through to an internal network, a company will often receive the incoming AS/2 connections in what is frequently known as a DMZ ('Demilitarized Zone'). This is a network area that, although part of a company's infrastructure, does not directly exist on their network but is connected to it via a firewall. This means that external systems cannot directly connect to a machine on the company's LAN. Rather than installing a complete DMZ infrastructure for just one customer, however, Marstons instead opted to use the Orion EDI Bureau service to receive the files on their behalf. The Bureau therefore works as a DMZ for Marston's.

The PathFinder installation at Marston's is configured to make scheduled connections to the Bureau to send and pick up data for multiple customers and profiles. This solution means that no inbound connections into the Marston's network are required, while avoiding the need for any significant infrastructure changes.

Since the initial implementation of this for a single customer, Marstons have extended their use of this aspect of their PathFinder system to an increasing number of AS/2 partners.

The joint venture between Marston's PLC and the Carlsberg Group is expanding our role, and we are creating new paths to facilitate business and data exchanges between the two companies.

ABOUT PATHFINDER

PathFinder is a data exchange tool, which can be used anywhere where there is a requirement to move a electronic business document between separate computer systems in a controlled, monitored and reliable fashion.

Although most commonly used for Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), the exchange of business documents (orders, invoices, despatch notes etc) in pre-defined formats between separate trading partners using a variety of communications protocols, PathFinder can be used for document transformation and communication for any purpose. Examples include the loading of orders into databases, automatic extraction and delivery of attachments from emails, and the use of APIs to extract and process data from both internal and cloud-based systems.

Companies upgrading to PathFinder from other solutions regularly tell us that PathFinder far surpasses the capabilities of their previously used solution.



"I would recommend Orion Consulting to other organisations without reservation and regard them very much as part of the extended Marston's team."

Phil Court, Head of Information Systems, Marston's PLC

For further information on PathFinder please visit our website at www.orionltd.co.uk or call us on 01572 771316