

# Elemental Microanalysis

Founded in 1976 Elemental Microanalysis has grown to become one of the UK leading manufacturers and suppliers of consumables and supplies for Elemental Analysers. Operating from their purpose built factory and laboratory complex in Devon, Elemental Microanalysis supply there good to customers in over over ten countries.

## The Challenge

Ian Smith Managing Director of Elemental Microanalysis contacted Solweb after seeing the WebPortal product at a Rent-IT open day. "Developing an online B2B website had become a real priority for the company and I was very impressed with the 123mrp.NET integration offered by Solweb's WebPortal product, states Ian. "However with no fewer than three other internal systems which the site would to integrate with, I was very conscious of how ambitious the project was", he adds.

During a preliminary meeting we were able to identify the projects key objectives:

1. Provide customers with an online e-commerce catalogue of products.
2. Supply customers with a number of methods for finding products based on the limited information they may have.

3. Integrate online sales to both new and existing customers.

4. Offer existing customers the ability to buy online utilising their specific price structures.

5. True multi currency trading for overseas clients.

6. Accommodate the customer's requirements for online account management system.

7. Provide customers with a facility to download specification sheets & operating manuals.

8. Publish news articles and press releases to the site.

9. Provide appropriate shipping options based on the items ordered

## The Solution

A key strategic IT objective for all companies is to increase utilisation and efficiency of existing infrastructure and investments. Most companies have a



hodgepodge of systems that each perform a unique set of functions. Sometimes these systems are designed to serve only the needs of either one region, one office, or one department. The problem arises when these systems are unable to communicate with one another. Time is wasted double keying data which could, and should have been automated.

"Integration with our internal 'Catalogue System' allowed WebPortal to populate both the menu system and the majority of our product pages requiring very little input from us. With any changes to the 'Catalogue' system instantly reflected on the website we can ensure that product specs are always up to date," comments Ian.

"Combine this with the standard features offered by WebPortal's 'Product Spec Builder' and its ability to link to 123mrp.NET's price structures and you are well on the way towards a totally integrated system," he adds.

"With over two thousand active products in our range, it is essential that the customer is able to find the item or consumable which they need quickly and easily," says Ian. The Advanced Product Locator that Solweb developed for us allows the customer to search for consumables and supplies based on the instrument they own or an equivalent OEM part code. He continues. "Solweb took our existing internal catalogue system and effectively turned it into a web application which can be used by all."

As a true business to business website it is vital to maintain a high level of control over the information which is disclosed to the public. "We have a large number of overseas customers with whom we have distributor agreements. So we can't simply display our pricing to anyone who visits the site," says Ian. "Fortunately WebPortal was flexible enough to allow us to lock down various aspects of the site, granting access to the pricing and more advanced functions once a customer has registered and been accepted. This also provides us with a method to capture the details

of potential customers details before they have made their first purchase." Taking advantage of the WebPortal Registration System, Elemental Microanalysis are able to accept registrations straight into 123mrp.NET from both new and existing customers.

It is hard to stress how beneficial trading 24-7 can be. But in a global market it is particularly important that your foreign customers have the ability to place orders at a time which is convenient to them. By utilising the information stored against the customer records in 123mrp.NET, WebPortal is able to offer true multi currency trading twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. "WebPortal allows us to manage our overseas and domestic operations from a single site taking care of currency conversion and tax whilst simplifying global sales," Ian explains.

"Content is king" cliché yes, but never before has it been so true. So in addition to the comprehensive e-commerce functions, Elemental required their website to be an informative resource that would help to drive customers to the site. WebPortal's extensive range of marketing tools has enabled Elemental to publish news articles and press releases with just a few clicks of the mouse. Whilst the 'Menu Builder' and 'CMS Page Builder' fulfilled Elemental's need to create and edit their own web pages.

Shipping and handling fees represent one of the biggest quandaries that e-commerce businesses face today. Calculating shipping charges for a website with international customers is hard enough, but throw in hazardous products which require additional handling charges and you are left with a logistical nightmare. To achieve a solution to this problem Solweb developed a bespoke 'Shipping Manager' which integrates with both 123mrp.NET and Elementals own 'Hazardous Product Database'. The end result an intelligent shipping system which calculates carriage based on destination, weight and hazardous class.

## Conclusion

Elemental Microanalysis is a very professional forward thinking business. Managing Director Ian Smith has a very hands on approach to running the company and realises the importance of software integration. "The ability to utilise existing systems and databases reduces both the workload and margin for error," explains Ian. "With the current state of the manufacturing sector the ability to adapt, innovate and utilise new technology is essential to a company's survival,"

Summing up his thoughts Ian states; "WebPortal has provided us with a completely integrated e-commerce, content managed solution. With very little administration we are now able to sell around two thousand products online to customers in more than ten different countries around the world. WebPortal breaks down the barriers to business imposed by traditional trading methods."

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**Ian Smith. Managing Director - Elemental Micro Analysis**

