

# Eicher boosts productivity and responsiveness with collaborative IBM portal.

## Overview

### ■ Challenge

Eicher needed to overcome cumbersome processes and limited access to information that kept employees from excelling at their jobs

### ■ Why Become an On Demand Business?

Eicher strove to raise productivity and be more responsive to employees' needs by automating administrative processes and providing realtime access to mission-critical information

### ■ Solution

EPIC, an integrated employee portal and collaboration platform, enables Eicher to enhance collaboration, productivity and knowledge

### ■ Key Benefits

Shortened turnaround times for key HR processes; increased productivity; lower administration costs; increased employee satisfaction



Established in 1959, Eicher began its business operations by rolling out India's first tractor. Today, the company is a major player in the Indian automobile industry.

Headquartered in New Delhi, India, the Eicher group of companies ([www.eicherworld.com](http://www.eicherworld.com)) is a front-line player in the global automotive engineering business. With revenues exceeding US\$300 million (INR 13 billion) and more than 5,000 employees worldwide, its diversified interests include design, development, production and marketing of tractors, commercial vehicles, motorcycles and automotive components. It also has interests in management consulting, cartography and geographic information systems, and engineering services.

*“We were wasting resources on cumbersome, high-overhead procedures. Without a fundamental change in our business processes, these problems threatened to affect our sales results, marketshare and, ultimately, profits.”*

—Sanjay Govil, Director and CIO, Eicher

## Integrating solutions that help enable On Demand Business

### On Demand Business Benefits

- Turnaround times for key HR processes reduced by up to 40%
- 75% of staff report increases in productivity by eliminating time-consuming, distracting paper-based processes
- Speeds payments to subcontractors
- Considerable reduction in data-entry errors and administrative costs by minimizing the need for telephone follow-ups, printed forms and manual data entry
- Rise in employee satisfaction due to quick, efficient resolution of workers' HR issues
- Projected improvements in company performance
- Ease of integration with legacy SAP system based on open-standards solution

*“Our Lotus software-based collaborative portal has brought us a spirit of efficient, productive, down-to-business collaboration that you can feel in the halls of every Eicher factory and business office.”*

–Sanjay Govil

For many years, Eicher has supported its business objectives with sophisticated IT processes, making their human resources (HR) functions smooth and efficient for back-end administrators. However, the processes were far less efficient for the company's staff. Most employees had limited access to the automated system. Performing HR-related activities meant filling out numerous paper forms, routing them to multiple managers for review and signature, and sending the signed and countersigned sheets to the appropriate department—often hundreds of miles away. Employees had no easy way to check the status of an expense reimbursement claim, request training, clarify a salary issue, request a sick day or vacation time—even report a change in marital status. “Chasing after simple requests was keeping our employees from doing their jobs,” says Sanjay Govil, director and CIO at Eicher.

Manual HR processes were not the only problem. Employees could not easily consult the manufacturing documentation, company procedures or quality standards that governed their work, because that information was not housed in a central location. With no convenient collaboration forum or corporate information repository, workgroups duplicated efforts. And company processes needed to be periodically reviewed at staff meetings. All of this was causing a tremendous loss in productivity and much dissatisfaction among employees.

“We were wasting resources on cumbersome, high-overhead, paper-based procedures. Without a fundamental change in our business processes, these problems threatened to affect our sales results, marketshare and, ultimately, profits,” Govil says.

### Building agility through instant information access

To avoid hindering its business growth, Eicher needed to become more responsive to its employees by replacing its unwieldy, paper-based HR processes with an efficient, cost-effective, automated solution. The new HR solution would enable staff members to draft a broad range of requests electronically, automatically route them for approval and processing, and track their progress. It would also eliminate redundant data-entry tasks, and the need for employees to chase down paper forms and conduct time-consuming follow-ups for approval. “To compete globally, we needed to cut costs, boost revenues and focus on delivering quality products and services—and that required streamlining our business processes,” says Govil.

The company also needed to provide employees with a single, easily accessible source for whatever information was most critical to their specific jobs—and a collaboration mechanism to drive greater internal efficiencies and deliver best-in-class customer service. “In short, the only way to respond with agility to the demands of the marketplace and our customers was to keep our employees focused on the job,” notes Govil. “To do that, we needed to provide them with instant access to crucial, group-specific information and to each other's ideas.”

### Developing productivity through collaboration

To achieve these objectives, Eicher decided to create and implement EPIC (Eicher Portal for Information and Collaboration), a company-wide employee portal that is connected to the core SAP HR system and other business processes.

The automotive engineering company worked with IBM Business Partner Pre-emptive Systems (P) Ltd. (Pre-emptive) to deploy the solution to provide staff with realtime access to enterprise information and HR processes, enhancing collaboration, productivity and knowledge.

Now, employees instantly initiate and track a broad range of business processes related to their performance management, travel arrangements, vacation and sick leave, benefits and expense accounts—all without leaving their desks or picking up the phone. Back-office staff are relieved of the burden of reading, interpreting and re-keying handwritten requests, correcting errors and conducting lengthy follow-ups by phone, and can focus on quickly and productively processing HR issues as they arise. Says Govil, “Our portal solution is saving us considerable time and minimizing errors, enabling our employees to keep their focus on strategic issues rather than on administrative activities.”

Employees at any Eicher location on the company’s wide-area network—including offices in India, the United States, the United Kingdom, South Africa and the Middle East—access EPIC from the corporate intranet. Using standard Web browsers running on their desktop computers—most of which are IBM Intel processor-based systems—the solution displays a personalized home page for each user. From there, users can choose from an array of HR and other internal processes, access a series of document libraries specific to their workgroups, read messages from company executives, enroll in specialized training programs, or collaborate using team rooms, chat spaces and virtual whiteboard facilities.

The EPIC solution provides employees with a repository of current corporate information and access to specialized documents relevant to their specific workgroups, including production standards and departmental work schedules. Additionally, the portal delivers extensive collaboration and communication functionality, enabling employees to quickly discover if specific colleagues are available to exchange ideas, correspond quickly through instant messaging capabilities, meet in groups using Web conferencing or participate in ongoing discussion threads using virtual bulletin boards. With a relevant store of knowledge to draw from, employees can work intelligently and efficiently to design and produce better products that satisfy market demands.

### **Alliances with top vendors add value**

EPIC is a customized solution based on Pre-emptive’s Augment™, an architectural framework for building and managing corporate intranets for effective employee relationship management and business process automation. It provides integrated, secure, browser-based access to enterprise information and business processes to enhance collaboration, productivity and knowledge by leveraging IBM Lotus Domino Web Server.

A joint team from Eicher and Pre-emptive designed, developed and deployed EPIC in just three months, using IBM Lotus Domino Designer, a development tool for collaborative Web-based applications. IBM Lotus Domino delivers the applications using open standards-based Java™ technology. The solution runs on robust IBM @server xSeries, using IBM Lotus Domino Enterprise Server to provide clustering services to support uninterrupted access and maximum performance.

---

## **Key Components**

---

### *Software*

- IBM Lotus® Domino™ R6
- IBM Lotus Domino Enterprise Server
- IBM Lotus Domino Designer®
- IBM Lotus Instant Messaging
- IBM Lotus Web Conferencing
- IBM Lotus Notes®

### *Servers*

- IBM @server xSeries®

### *Business Partner*

- Pre-emptive Systems (P) Ltd.
-

Pre-emptive used its own workflow engine (also developed using Lotus Notes) to design custom applications facilitating about 30 individual HR processes, defining business logic and a participant list for each process. Underlying data resides in IBM Lotus Domino databases on the xSeries servers. IBM Lotus Web Conferencing and IBM Lotus Instant Messaging provide realtime collaborative functionality. Eventually, IBM Lotus Notes will deliver enterprise-wide messaging and office automation, replacing Eicher's previous Microsoft Exchange e-mail and scheduling platform. The solution uses the open-standard XML to integrate with the company's central SAP R/3 system, which manages its HR and other business processes.

"We evaluated several vendors and applications for our portal solution, including BroadVision and Microsoft," Govil says. "But as in the past, we found that IBM offered the best solution to meet the requirements of our enterprise, as well as unparalleled technological expertise and industry experience. Compared to Microsoft Exchange, our Lotus solutions offer stronger collaborative functionality, enabling us to develop and deploy such capabilities quickly. And products such as Lotus Instant Messaging bring employees in our distributed organization closer by enabling them to have impromptu chats online, making it much faster and more efficient for them to collaborate or share their knowledge."

Another deciding factor, adds Govil, was IBM's worldwide network of Business Partners. "IBM has teamed with frontrunners that provide unique value, complementing its own leading-edge solutions with specialized technologies and know-how," Govil notes. "When we needed a partner to help develop our portal, IBM gave us a list of top-notch vendors. We selected Pre-emptive for the flexibility, scalability and functional elegance of its Lotus software-based solution."

According to Sanjaya Kumar Saxena, Pre-emptive's chief executive officer, Lotus software from IBM has enabled the systems integrator to offer its customers a highly extensible and customizable On Demand Business solution. "We chose Lotus Domino as the foundation for our offering because of its unmatched flexibility for developing powerful, scalable collaborative On Demand Business solutions," he says. "Thanks to its extensive use of open standards, such as XML and JavaServer Pages, it integrates easily with our customers' existing infrastructure while giving them the confidence that future additions to their environment will integrate just as easily."

#### **From team spirit to bottom-line results**

EPIC has only been live a short time, and already the solution has garnered impressive benefits, notes Govil. "Turnaround times for most HR processes have been slashed by up to 40 percent," he says. "EPIC's automated workflows and seamless integration with SAP have reduced data-entry duplication and errors considerably." According to recent employee polls, 75 percent of the company's workforce has reported an increase in their productivity due to the collaboration portal, and general staff satisfaction has risen. "Administrative costs have been cut significantly and we're able to pay subcontractors faster," Govil says.

But the greatest gain, Govil says, is not as easy to quantify. "Our Lotus software-based collaborative portal has brought us a spirit of efficient, productive, down-to-business collaboration that you can feel in the halls of every Eicher factory and business office," he says. "That change may not quite be measurable today, but I have little doubt it is already reflected in the responsiveness and service excellence we deliver to our clientele. That, in turn, will show up as numbers in our annual reports."

#### **For more information**

Please contact your IBM sales representative or IBM Business Partner.

Visit us at:

**ibm.com/ondemand**

For more information about Pre-emptive, visit:  
[www.augmentonline.com](http://www.augmentonline.com)



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2003

IBM Corporation  
Corporate Marketing  
New Orchard Road  
Armonk, NY 10504  
U.S.A.

Produced in the United States of America  
09-03  
All Rights Reserved

Domino, Domino Designer, @server, IBM, the IBM logo, Lotus, Lotus Notes, Notes, the On Demand Business logo and xSeries are trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Java and all Java-based trademarks are trademarks of Sun Microsystems, Inc. in the United States, other countries or both.

Microsoft is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States, other countries or both.

Augment is a trademark of Pre-emptive.

Other company, product or service names trademarks or service marks of others.

This case study is an example of how one customer and Business Partner use IBM products. There is no guarantee of comparable results.

References in this publication to IBM products or services do not imply that IBM intends to make them available in all countries in which IBM operates.