

# The Dow Chemical Company

## Dow streamlines product shipping and lowers costs by using Adobe® solutions to automatically generate customer documents from SAP

### The Dow Chemical Company

- Global science and technology company
- Headquarters: Midland, Michigan
- Revenues: \$28 billion annually
- Size: 50,000 employees worldwide
- Founded: 1897

[www.dow.com](http://www.dow.com)

### Industry

Manufacturing

### Solutions

- Label and barcode generation
- Shipping, packing, and picking slips
- Compliant documentation generation

### Products Used

- Adobe Central Pro Output Server
- Adobe Output Designer
- Adobe Acrobat®
- SAP
- Documentum

### Company Profile

The Dow Chemical Company is a leading science and technology company that provides chemical, plastic, and agricultural products and services to many essential consumer markets, including food, transportation, health and medicine, personal and home care, and building and construction. Each day, the company ships thousands of products to customers in more than 170 countries around the world. With automated document generation based on Adobe Intelligent Document Solutions, Dow has streamlined product shipping, reduced labor costs, and enhanced the quality of customer-facing documents.

### Challenges Faced

#### Automate the generation of customer-facing shipping documents

Every product that Dow ships is accompanied by many documents such as safety sheets, regulatory guidelines, product certificates, invoices, and other materials. Generating these documents on preprinted forms using manual processes was time-consuming and costly because of high labor requirements and risk of human error. To reduce administrative time and costs, Dow wanted to automate document generation, using customer and product information from its global, SAP-based enterprise system.

#### Ensure document quality

Dow wanted a fast, efficient way to design attractive electronic templates in multiple languages, including Chinese and others with double-byte character sets. The goal was to deploy a solution that could generate highly readable, professional-quality documents and offer the company precise control over output, including document appearance, position of logos, and inclusion of watermarks.

#### Generate documents for electronic or paper-based delivery

The format in which Dow customers request shipping documents varies. Some prefer receiving documents electronically, while others want materials delivered on paper. To address these varied requirements, Dow needed a solution that could generate documents in a universally readable, secure format that could be e-mailed as an attachment, faxed, or printed for inclusion with shipped materials.

#### Comply with regulatory requirements

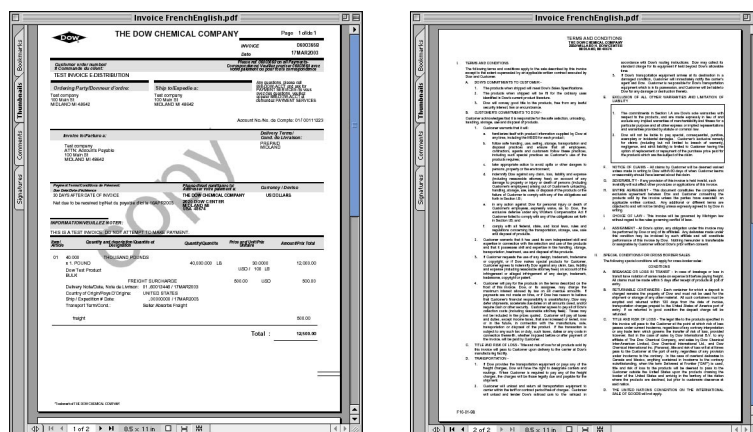
To reinforce its brand and comply with legal and regulatory guidelines, Dow needed to ensure that documents looked the same whether delivered on paper or electronically. In addition, the materials had to include the company logo and approved text required by regulatory agencies. For example, government regulations specify some of the content required in safety sheets. By automating its document-generation processes, the company could ensure regulatory compliance and improve document content.

### Success Strategy

Dow automated its document-generation processes by linking its enterprise system with Adobe solutions. Data from the SAP system is sent to the Adobe solution and placed in the electronic templates that Dow designed for customer-facing materials such as safety sheets and invoices. The Adobe solution automatically includes on



By automating the production of customer-facing materials, Dow has reduced costs, enhanced the quality of its documents, and improved its ability to adhere to regulatory requirements. Data from the SAP system is sent to the Adobe solution and placed in the electronic templates that Dow designed for customer-facing materials such as safety sheets and invoices. Completed documents are then converted to Adobe PDF and automatically distributed.



“By enabling us to generate accurate documents faster, the Adobe solutions make it easier to get products out the door in a timely and cost-effective manner.”

Brian Bell,  
Lead architecture specialist,  
The Dow Chemical Company

each document required information such as logos or safety information. Completed documents are then converted to Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) and automatically distributed via the method—print, fax, or e-mail—appropriate for the particular customer and document type.

When materials generated need slight modifications, such as the addition of watermarks, Dow staff members use Adobe Acrobat for online editing of the Adobe PDF files in batch mode. Final Adobe PDF files are stored in a Documentum enterprise content-management solution for easy retrieval.

## Business Benefits

- Reduced time and labor required to produce customer-facing shipping documents
- Ensured document quality, both in terms of accuracy and professional appearance
- Increased speed of payment by improving readability and quality of customer invoices
- Compliance with legal and regulatory guidelines for content included in customer materials
- Reduced shipping delays associated with generating and delivering product packaging materials

By automating the production of customer-facing materials, Dow now produces 20,000 documents a day—more than 400,000 each month—faster, at lower cost, and with the assurance that the data in the documents is consistent with that in the SAP system. “By enabling us to generate accurate documents faster, the Adobe solutions make it easier to get products out the door in a timely and cost-effective manner,” says Brian Bell, lead architecture specialist at Dow.

Ease of distributing the documents by e-mail, fax, or as printed copies included with shipments has improved customer service as well. “Customers like receiving documents electronically—especially because Adobe PDF files are readable, attractive, and compact,” Bell notes. “Furthermore, streamlined distribution of materials and improved document quality can help contribute to faster payment for delivered goods.”

Dow has ensured that shipping documents are complete and accurate because the Adobe solution automatically includes all the required elements, such as logos and legal language. Automated document generation gives Dow confidence that it is meeting the regulatory requirements for customer-facing documentation.

What’s more, by migrating to Adobe PDF as a standard file format, Dow has gained the ability to perform sophisticated document handling, store documents in the company’s document retrieval archives, and digitally sign documents in countries that permit it. Bell concludes, “Automating the handling of business documents from the time they’re generated from the SAP system is a tremendous business benefit.”

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