

CASE STUDY



www.tellabs.com

Communications Equipment Provider Becomes More Agile with XML

Tellabs experts design, develop, deploy and support solutions for world's largest communications companies and government agencies. Known worldwide for superior customer service, Tellabs ranks among the *BusinessWeek* InfoTech 100, and is part of the NASDAQ-100 Index, NASDAQ Global Select Market and the S&P 500.

BENEFITS

Tellabs needed a way to improve documentation and sharing knowledge on products in order to:

- Improve service in the field
- Reuse common content
- Create a formal documentation review process
- Link back to the customer support knowledge base
- Speed delivery for configuration and installation documentation

Tellabs Solidifies Customer Relationships by Providing Superior Field Service Documentation using XMetaL® and DITA

Telecom Equipment Manufacturer Gains Competitive Advantage From Improved Company-wide Knowledge Transfer

The telecommunications race continues as service providers attempt to maintain market share, improve quality of service and increase service offerings. Today, large service providers are focused on last-mile high bandwidth to facilitate multiple product bundles (phone, Internet and Cable) on a single network. To meet evolving user needs, Tellabs designs and develops networking equipment to enable high-quality voice, video and data services over wireline and wireless networks around the world.

Continuous change is a hallmark of the communications industry. Tellabs' products reflect requests from customers and their need for competitive advantage. With a constantly growing and evolving product portfolio, integrating and retrofitting old and new equipment remains a challenge for service providers. A key corporate objective at Tellabs is to make this integration easier.

When Customers are King, Content is Critical

The nature of the telecom business, where massive infrastructure costs limit market entry, controls the number of players. Since equipment manufacturers all vie for the same customers, service is a cornerstone of Tellabs' philosophy. Tellabs' New Product Introduction (NPI) group in Richardson, Texas, is responsible for delivering many of these customer solutions and services. To boost customer satisfaction and retain loyalty, Tellabs technical support engineer Art Kedzierski reviewed current customer documents and realized that the group could make improvements. Tellabs' documentation was written from a product perspective, instead of a customer perspective. But the technical engineers in the field needed help to generate customer-specific upgrade and installation documentation on a site-by-site basis. Kedzierski came up with a system in which engineers could reuse both product and process content, and then implemented that system across the Customer Service organization.

"Our customers are some of the largest communications companies in the world, and we work with them closely to ensure our solutions meet their needs. Essentially every customer deployment is different, although they all may use the same technology," said Kedzierski. "The variables include customers' environment, existing equipment and future deployment needs. We needed a way to ensure that our documentation accurately reflected new equipment features and at the same time presented best practices and procedures for upgrading equipment."

C A S E S T U D Y



“Switching to topic-oriented authoring enabled our field engineers to quickly and accurately generate custom installation guides that reuse content and incorporate engineers’ expertise from the field.”

Art Kedzierski, Technical Support Engineer, Tellabs

One-off Implementations Dictated the Need for a Content Solution

Because of these customized implementations, much of the documentation is based on each customer’s installation or upgrade. The NPI team of technical support engineers generates documentation specific to each implementation of Tellabs’ solutions. Because the company is dedicated to excellent customer service, there are no real “off-the-shelf” solutions. Each solution is customized and configured for a particular client and implementation, which makes the installation documentation process highly sophisticated.

“When we deploy a new system, we take the existing technical information about the product, and we write methods and procedure documents for installation and troubleshooting. In addition, our customers participate in the development of this content in the same way they participate in the development of our equipment,” said Kedzierski. “They often want configuration instructions to be produced using their corporate standards; we often write several versions of documentation for the same piece of equipment. The customer, in essence, becomes a content contributor.”

Support Engineers Needed Authoring Guidance

One of the challenges for Tellabs was that the engineers writing field guide documents were not writers but highly skilled technical support engineers working with customers. While they had considerable subject matter expertise, they lacked process and direction in terms of their ability to write good documentation. As a result, the final documents sent to customers needed more work and Tellabs knew improving them would make its customers’ lives easier.

Kedzierski and the NPI team recognized the need for a process to ensure consistency and ability to re-use documents. “XML and content management systems were on my radar for some time. I knew we could benefit from a combination of the two,” said Kedzierski. His goal was to implement an efficient, accurate, end-to-end content authoring solution.

XMetaL® and DITA Facilitate Customized Content

In the spring of 2006, Kedzierski started working with JustSystems (XMetaL) to design a solution for information storage, authoring and reuse, based on Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA). DITA, which breaks down content into small, self-contained topics, facilitates reuse of content and fast turnaround of custom installation documents. The DITA framework enabled Tellabs to define company-specific, product-specific and customer-specific information chunks to support content reuse, ensure accuracy and reduce redundancy. The tool enables the Tellabs NPI team to easily pick and choose the topics to reuse in a final document and assemble them with a DITA map. The extensibility of DITA with publishing tools enabled the Tellabs NPI team to quickly transform XML content into formatted PDF documents ready for field engineers and customers.

Today, the technical support engineers use XMetaL integrated with EMC Documentum WebTop Content Management System (CMS), which will eventually feed their Knova knowledge base. Previously, all of the installation information was stored as Word documents with limited ability to search or reuse content. Today, the team is building a repository of reusable content topics for subject matter experts in the field and customer support representatives.

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About JustSystems

JustSystems is a leading global software provider with three decades of successful innovation in office productivity, information management, and consumer and enterprise software. With over 2,500 customers worldwide, the company is continuing a global expansion strategy based on its xfy enterprise software, XMetaL content lifecycle solutions, and its pioneering work in enabling XBRL financial reporting technologies. JustSystems is one of the 2008 KMWorld 100 Companies that Matter in Knowledge Management, a 2008 EContent 100 member, and was recognized on the 2008 KMWorld Trend-Setting Product list for XMetaL. Major strategic partnerships include IBM, Oracle and EMC.

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Working in New Ways

Tellabs engineers wanted to improve the original process, so they were prepared for a revolutionary change, even if it meant changing the way they worked.

“The team saw a potential to improve its documentation process,” said Kedzierski. “I let people see for themselves how much easier their jobs could become. Contributors and authors became quickly familiar with the tool and saw a dramatic change in their individual productivity.”

Leveraging Knowledge as a Product

“Knowledge is as critical a product offering as our hardware and software, and needs to be developed and managed with the same level of granularity. It is deeply connected to our brand value. Knowledge transfer is everyone’s job. Once you put systems in place to enable seamless knowledge transfer and treat knowledge with the formal respect it deserves, there are numerous benefits to the enterprise,” said Kedzierski.

Brand Consistency

Tellabs made some acquisitions, and each acquired company brought its own documentation standards. With the new system, branding is easier and technical experts know the formatting standards. “Now, our documents all look and feel like they come from the same company, and with XMetaL and DITA they take a fraction of the time to produce,” said Kedzierski.

Accuracy and Efficiency

Tellabs’ goal is to develop a library of topics that can accurately address unique challenges. It sees the process as a dramatic time-saver and anticipates improvement in customer service as well. Other benefits include a continuously up-to-date knowledge base as a result of the link between the content authored by field engineers and the knowledge base. Because the engineers have moved to topic-oriented authoring, the topics can be searched and easily re-used in another set of documentation for the next customer or project.

Enhanced Customer Relationships

Kedzierski’s “knowledge as product” revolution has tied the value of knowledge to the much deeper brand value of placing the customer relationship at the center of business. Enabling the engineering team to provide higher quality materials in a shorter period of time illustrates the company’s real commitment to customer service.

“By migrating to topic-oriented authoring, we can reuse content quickly and turnaround custom documents at a moments’ notice,” said Kedzierski. “Now when we receive a support call from a customer, we can turn around an updated and accurate document. This approach to field support may be unique in the telecom industry and will provide a significant competitive advantage to us in a tight market where our service reputation means everything.”