
RS Components Speeds Product Onboarding by 50 Percent

A CASE STUDY

World-Renowned Electronic Components Distributor Powers Product Onboarding with Codifyd Bridge Software for E-Commerce



INDUSTRY
B2B E-COMMERCE:
ELECTRONICS AND
MAINTENANCE PRODUCTS

REVENUE
£1,266.2 MILLION

SUPPLIERS
2,500

PRODUCTS
500,000+

CUSTOMERS
1 MILLION+

LOCATION
OXFORD,
UNITED KINGDOM



Alan Miller
Global head of content,
RS Components

When you're a global distributor of electronic components, introducing new, innovative products to engineers and procurement specialists is an important part of business for both buyer and seller.

That's what RS Components strives to do every day as the world's leading high-service distributor of electronics and maintenance products. Headquartered in Oxford, United Kingdom, RS sells top-quality parts across more than 80 countries through its e-commerce channel, www.RS-online.com, offering goods from the world's leading brands.

Part of RS's success lies in meeting the complex e-commerce needs of its customers. From organized product data to seamless navigation and search to data sheets and application guides, RS knows that professional buyers rely on quality product content and a structured website to make confident purchase decisions for their businesses. RS also knows that introducing new online products and ensuring quality content depend on effective relationships with its 2,500 suppliers.

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The responsibility for managing product content falls with Alan Miller, global head of content at RS. With a worldwide team of 120 managing content for more than 500,000 products available to over 1 million customers, Miller collaborates with product management, marketing, e-commerce, and supply management to ensure RS's product content delivers value to customers.

“Our vision is to be customer focused, so that means we focus on the quality of our content for the channels that customers want to engage in,” says Miller. “We know that high-quality content is key for our suppliers and customers alike, so we need to engage very effectively,” he says of the new product introduction (NPI) process.

Fusing Disparate Processes

CHALLENGES

- » Multiple, disparate NPI processes
- » Lengthy NPI process requiring many weeks to onboard new products
- » Incomplete, inconsistent, poor-quality product content
- » Poor customer perception of product content
- » Low customer engagement
- » Low online conversion

In the past, before loading a SKU to its website, RS had to manage several processes for collecting, standardizing, and loading different types of content. They would first obtain product information from suppliers such as product categories, attributes, and attribute values. Next, they'd gather digital assets such as data sheets and product images. Then, they'd collect transactional data like payment and ordering information. Miller's team would then create the technical copy, features, and benefits that appear on the product page. With tight deadlines, high standards for product content, and tens of thousands of new products to introduce each year, it was crucial, yet difficult, for RS to move these processes forward seamlessly and quickly.

"We had five or six disparate processes we joined together ourselves, then plugged into various systems," Miller says. "That manifested itself into a very long time to market with a huge amount of our time devoted to the NPI process. There was a fair bit of dissatisfaction from us and our suppliers," he adds.

These disjointed processes also led to errors in the product content that negatively affected website navigation, search, and conversion. With NPI requiring many weeks to launch a single product and poor perception of content among RS's customers, Miller knew there had to be a better way. "We needed to take focus away from just NPI to the whole content set and give it all equal value," Miller says of his search for a solution to RS's problem.

The Right Component for Successful Product Introduction

Miller's end vision is to reduce RS's NPI process to 24 hours. While that isn't yet a reality, he's been able to successfully go live with 26,000 SKUs in 25 percent of the time using Codifyd Bridge, a product onboarding and omnichannel management solution. A significant improvement for RS's NPI process, Bridge is content agnostic and works with RS's product, transactional, and digital asset information.

“**Bridge reduces guesswork and errors, speeds time to market, and improves content quality.**”

Using patented machine learning technology, Bridge classifies SKUs between supplier and distributor product hierarchies, maps product attributes between product models, and transforms values for consistency in spelling and formatting. For many distributors like RS, NPI is lengthy because content inconsistencies and gaps must be fixed in supplier product data before displaying online. Bridge eliminates this manual, repetitive work by automatically mapping content between a supplier's product model and a distributor's. Bridge also

recommends mapping ideas if product content isn't an exact match between supplier and distributor. The result is reduced guesswork and errors, faster time to market, and improved content quality—the winning formula for product assortment growth and increased e-commerce sales.

For example, one of RS's suppliers may refer to the coil resistance of a high-frequency relay as *1.6 kiloohms* while a second supplier calls it *1.6 kΩ* and a third supplier refers to it as *1.60 kΩ*. In some cases, a supplier may not even have this information available. Multiplied by tens of thousands of SKUs and millions of data points, fixing these problems is tedious, costly, and time consuming. In addition, when poor-quality product information is displayed online, it prevents buyers from quickly finding the products they need, which is integral to their jobs as professional purchasers.

Powering a High-Speed, Integrated Network

With Bridge, distributors and suppliers partner to trade product content, creating a network in which disparate product content is collected, augmented, and edited at rapid speeds with virtually no errors.

"Everybody from product to content to inventory management to pricing—everybody felt the benefit of it," Miller says of RS's pilot program using Bridge. Because RS organizes teams around each manufacturer, Bridge enabled those teams to seamlessly launch each manufacturer's new product set to RS's website. "In our first year using Bridge, we've reduced time to market by 50 percent, which helped us double the amount of product content we onboard to our e-commerce site. We've been able to grow product assortments for our strategic suppliers, which has resulted in a significant improvement in sales for their products," Miller says.

Bridge also improved RS's product attributes and values, which have a direct impact on product discovery, user experience, and customer engagement.

"The quality and completeness of the attribute set is vital to product page information and the filters we use for search," Miller says. "We know that engaging content is a good development for us, and Bridge is an enabler of that. It has allowed us to manage this at pretty decent scale that we couldn't do if we were doing it from scratch," Miller adds. "The amount of content and products you can apply to Bridge is huge, and that addresses exactly where RS wants to go from a strategic direction."

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Results



50% reduction in time to market



Improved customer engagement, conversion rates, and e-commerce sales



Increased content accuracy, completeness, and consistency



Consolidated NPI processes resulting in improved collaboration, workflow, and efficiency

For additional information about Codifyd, please contact
your Codifyd sales consultant.

Email us at sales@codifyd.com or visit codifyd.com