



Hosted Fax Services at Honda: transparent, scalable, and directly from SAP®.

When Soichiro Honda founded the “Honda Technical Research Institute” in 1946, it was just a simple wooden hut where he planned to build motorized bicycles. Today, Honda Motor Co. Ltd. is a company that is present in 150 countries all over the world and employs over 131,000 people. In order to guarantee the effectiveness of its mission critical communications, Honda relies on Retarus’ global messaging services.

The SAP® Customer Competence Center at Honda Motor supports SAP® systems and applications for all of the interconnected Honda companies. This requires sending more than a thousand debit notes every day to dealers in different countries. The debit notices are sent by fax directly from Honda’s SAP® system via a secure connection into the Retarus global fax platform. Outsourcing fax services is a great example of how corporate IT departments can reduce their carbon footprint, and increase security and compliance with a minimal effort. “Since we use automatic debit transfers, it is important that our dealers receive notes showing the individual

debit items in a timely manner,” explains Christoph Bungert from the SAP® Customer Competence Center project team of Honda Motor: “With our internal fax server that we used in the past, there were frequent transmission delays at peak times. Problem-free document transmission of our faxes is critical for our dealers.” In order to meet the stringent demands of the auto industry, Honda chose to implement Faxolution® for SAP® from Retarus, a fax solution with a SAP®-certified interface. Fax transmissions are now delivered by the Retarus global fax platform and delivery confirmations are returned directly into Honda’s SAP® system.

Honda's Challenge

Sending over 1,000 faxes every day posed a number of problems for the SAP® Customer Competence Center at Honda Motor. At peak times, the fax server was overloaded, which resulted in delivery delays. Due to the important nature of the faxes for the dealers, any delay in communication was unacceptable. Managing the overall cost of the faxes were also critical for Honda. With the internal fax server the debit notes for all branches were sent from a central location. There was no way of minimizing transmission costs by utilizing "least cost routing". For Honda this meant that the cost of international fax transmissions was unnecessarily high. In addition, there was uncertainty about possible changes in the national regulations regarding sending legally binding business correspondence. For example, when and where can faxes be replaced by e-mail? Setting up dedicated fax servers in the respective countries would have meant that these servers would no longer be needed or used after a migration to e-mail.

Honda's Solution

Plans to deploy fax servers in every country were rejected because the architectural design would have resulted in considerable organizational and administrative cost. In order to avoid higher costs and delayed fax transmissions, Honda decided to move forward with Retarus' Faxolution for SAP®. Now, in all branches connected to Honda's SAP® system, the debit notes are generated and faxed directly from the central system. Fax pages are transmitted electronically to the Retarus global fax platform and then delivered to the recipient. Confirmations are then sent back directly to SAP® to trigger the next action within the workflow. There is no size limit, and even batch jobs with several thousand fax pages are processed without any capacity concerns.

Absolute cost transparency.

"The main benefit of our fax solution is that all costs are completely transparent for Honda," says Retarus CEO Martin Hager. In addition to a fixed service fee, they are only charged for each transmitted fax page. Monthly reports assign the operating costs for all invoices and individual fax transmissions to the corresponding organization. Honda does not need any hardware: and as a result, no capital is tied up, so there are no depreciation expenses, and there are no costs for maintenance and administration. The system can be scaled to meet all requirements. Increased volumes are never a problem – and if fax utilization is reduced, no capital is tied up in redundant hardware.

Technology box:

- **Direct transmission of business documents from SAP® Systems**
- **High flexibility and scalability**
- **Secure connectivity for fax transmission**
- **24/7 monitoring**
- **Detailed reporting on all processed fax jobs**
- **No costs for hardware, software or maintenance**
- **Reduced workload for internal IT resources**

Successful implementation.

Implementation of the Faxolution System was an easy process, even though it was necessary to meet the high security requirements of the Honda Customer Competence Center. Together with Honda's technicians, Retarus configured the firewall, router and a VPN (Virtual Private Network). This configuration not only guarantees the necessary security, but also ensures optimum communication and stable fax transmissions. After implementation, the system was thoroughly tested and rolled out to all of the branches. Due to the success of the Faxolution for SAP service, Honda and Retarus are currently extending their integration for "Corporate Messaging".