



A Centralized Treasury System Puts Biesterfeld in Complete Control of its Global Cash Flow

Industry: Chemical Distribution

Geographies: Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, South America

Company Size: Enterprise

Employees: 1000+

Headquarters: Hamburg, Germany

Challenges:

- A decentralized treasury system meant the company only had visibility into two of their fifty subsidiaries.
- The use of multiple systems resulted in a time-consuming collection and reconciliation process.
- With so many subsidiaries, the list of banking groups grew larger and created additional costs.

Solutions:

Coupa Treasury Management

Results:

- Consolidating systems and moving all subsidiaries' accounts to one platform increased global cash visibility by 95%.
- Completing all treasury activities in one place reduced the company's number of banking groups by 70%.
- Automating transactions, EMR processing, payments, and other tasks saves the Treasury team over three hours a day.

A Better Way to Support Global Operations

Family-owned Biesterfeld is a leading distributor of plastics, specialty chemicals, and rubber materials. With more than 117 years of experience, the company currently operates throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, North America and South America.

"We have subsidiaries in more than 50 countries, and we serve customers in over 120 countries," explains Marie Tack, Head of Group Treasury. "You can find our materials in cars, cosmetics, and cleaning products. Just everywhere. Our colleagues always say you can find us in your daily life."

"We knew having 75 banks and 600 accounts was inefficient. Our goal was to streamline our processes for all SAP entities so we could become better in-house partners for our subsidiaries."

— Marie Tack,
Head of Group Treasury

Supporting so many subsidiaries and customers worldwide brings a lot of complexity to Biesterfeld's operations, particularly around global cash management. Previously, the company used a decentralized treasury structure with multiple systems and processes in different locations.

"We knew having 75 banks and 600 accounts was inefficient. Our goal was to streamline our processes for all SAP entities so we could become better in-house partners for our subsidiaries," says Marie. The use of so many different systems — and the lack of data integration between them — prevented the finance team from gaining visibility and control of their cash supply.

That's why Biesterfeld chose Coupa's Treasury Management to centralize processes — empowering the company to take complete control over its liquidity and global cash flow.

Boosting Cash Visibility While Reducing Banking Group Costs with One System

Before Coupa, Biesterfeld used several systems to track its finances. Not only was this time-consuming but there was no way to aggregate data across these systems. This left the Treasury team with visibility into only two of their fifty subsidiaries.

Today, all subsidiaries, accounts, and credit facilities are viewable in real time in one place on Coupa's platform. Using one system has improved cash and supplier visibility by 95%, enabling better negotiations for supplier payment terms that benefit the global subsidiaries.

In addition to better cash visibility, one system enabled Biesterfeld to reduce the number of its banking groups by 70%. Streamlining payments with a centralized payment system and simple intercompany account structures for all subsidies gives the Treasury team better control and reduces costly maintenance fees.

The other added benefit? Fraud is easier to prevent.

"Fraud prevention has been greatly simplified with the introduction of centralized processes. Full visibility into payments and suppliers gives the Treasury team confidence in the payment process," says Marie.

Speeding Up Work Nearly 50% with Automation and Digitization

Improving productivity and making work easier for the Treasury team was another area of concern. With processes isolated and highly manual, the team spent too much time importing account statements, reconciling balances, and inserting payments in multiple places.

After switching to Coupa's platform, processes are now streamlined. From transactions to EMIR processing to payments, many of those repetitive tasks are no longer required. The number of hours saved is roughly half of a working day — giving the team time to focus on more high-impact initiatives.

Making Better Decisions with Data-Driven Insights

While the benefits of implementing Coupa are far-reaching, the biggest advantage is gaining a single point of truth for the company, according to Marie.

"Data is key nowadays," she says. "You need data in one place to build accurate reports and make better decisions. With Coupa, our ERP system and different third parties are streamlined and linked together."

Biesterfeld is certainly using data to its advantage. The finance team can quickly analyze data and create customized reports to share across the entire organization.

More Savings and Financial Independence Await

With the global rollout of Coupa Treasury nearly complete, Biesterfeld isn't done just yet. The company is looking to further streamline its cash and liquid management by automating hedging in its trading platform and bringing that data within Coupa.

Liquidity planning is also on the future agenda. Being a distribution company, rolling cash forecasting will ensure financial obligations are always met. Along with increasing cash pooling and reducing banking fees even further, these efforts will put financial independence firmly within reach for Biesterfeld.

Go from a data-entering to a data-driven company.

Contact the Coupa team