

Value Chain Agent

english



**Value Chain
Agent**

Value Chain Agent: Efficiency comes as standard

The iPoint Value Chain Agent speaks for itself: The software agent manages entire value chains in different areas such as quality, logistics, sales, standards, finance or production. It's a solution used across different industries that makes suppliers' lives easier.

Efficiency is not a matter of course – as suppliers who have to rely on painstaking, manual searches in manufacturers' internet portals well know. There is no way of avoiding these portals, as this is where OEMs manage their supplier networks. From tendering and order requests right down to payment methods and schedules: Searching for important information is often tedious for suppliers.

Since manufacturing standards do not apply, suppliers have to scour each portal individually. There are often a number of portals for one manufacturer – each with different technologies, user interfaces and amounts of information. It is easy to imagine that it gets a little complicated when sites have to be searched continuously. Information on quality management or logistics is especially critical for deadlines and often requires an immediate response from suppliers. Only those who scan the portals thoroughly can do their job well and receive positive supplier feedback.

However, simply finding information is often not enough. As soon as the data is accessed, it has to be incorporated – often manually – into company processes and systems. Another phase of communication is responding to portal operators, which also takes time. But these daunting scenarios can be a thing of the past – if you want them to be.

Jack-of-all-trades

Those who know the iPoint Value Chain and make use of it are amazed at how effective data exchange with manufacturers can actually be. The agent accesses the required portals automatically and at regular intervals. Here the electronic aid has access to all essential information in areas such as quality, logistics, sales, standards, finance or production. The new data is immediately extracted, converted and incorporated into the company's IT infrastructure – completely integrating company and customer data. If manufacturers require data, the iPoint Value Chain Agent stores it in the manufacturer's system after internal processing. Integration both upstream and downstream meets all requirements while running unobtrusively in the background. The software is always ready for immediate use. For those who like to measure quality against figures: Return on investment is usually achieved in just a few months.

Technology + Industry know-how = Solution

The agent is controlled by so-called missions. These stipulate where to find data and how to access it, what the agent has to do to retrieve it and how it delivers the data back to the supplier system safely. This is where iPoint's know-how really

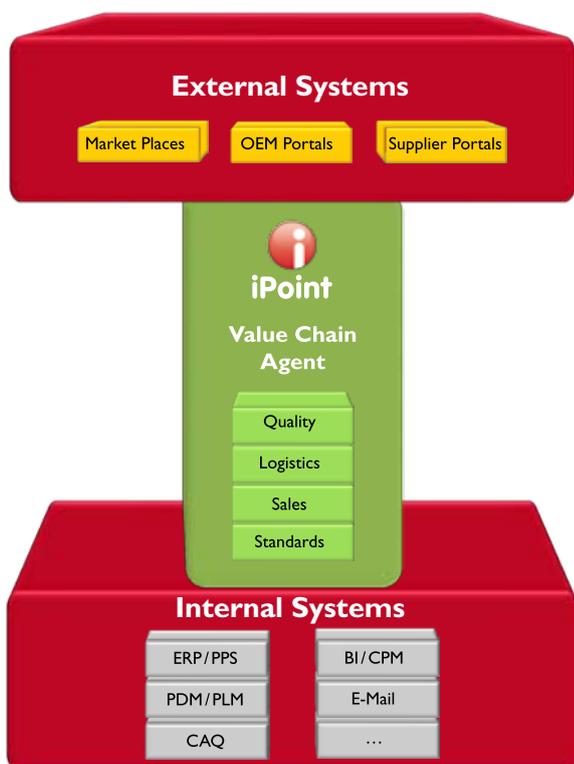
“The overall performance runs like clockwork.”

Karl-Heinz Vincze, Behr Hella Thermocontrol



comes into its own. iPoint is an unparalleled expert in integration platforms and adapters as well as manufacturers' processes and requirements. This results in solutions that can immediately be put to good use.

As an insider in the automotive industry, iPoint has developed more than 700 missions since 2001, a figure reflecting the number of requests from manufacturers. All missions are constantly adapted to changes made in the individual web portals via live-update. This process is ongoing and usually takes place within 24 hours of the change being announced. And even better: You don't have to lift a finger. What's more the system is becoming more and more efficient as 100 new missions are made available each year.



- > **Quality management (Reporting, guarantee, scorecarding, claims)**
- > **Logistics (Material flow and supply, empties and container management, VMI)**
- > **Purchasing and sales (Offer, order, price comparison)**
- > **Standards commission (Standards, specifications, legally binding documents)**
- > **Live-updates for portal changes and new missions**
- > **A broad distribution of results: Via e-mail, document links, databases or bidirectional integration into your internal systems (ERP, CAQ, etc.)**
- > **Support for 3270 Host requests**
- > **Powerful interval definitions for timing**
- > **Intelligent browsing with JavaScript support**
- > **Adaptable use of resources for ideal hardware and network efficiency**
- > **Managing priorities for critical missions**
- > **Sophisticated authorization concept**
- > **Mass change of missions, e.g. for leave coverage**
- > **Central management of portal users and plants**
- > **Automated password management**
- > **Optional document management system "iPoint Document Master"**
- > **Optional graphic BI monitor**

Fully flexible system

More than 160 iPoint customers from a wide range of industries regularly use the Value Chain Agent to access data from portals over 12,000 times a day. There are more than 700 missions available, with around 100 more are added each year. The advantage is complete flexibility.

Competitive edge

... Quality

Automated not manual: The Value Chain Agent obtains reliable data from the customer portals on its own. Whether 8D reports or dealing with claims or guarantees (such as field failures) – users always work with the latest data in their accustomed CAQ system. What's more, iPoint agent technology makes data available for analyses on a cross-plant and product group basis for a prompt overview at no extra effort.

Here the QDX standard of the Verband der Automobilindustrie (automotive industry association) is used, which iPoint played an important part in developing.

... Logistics

The iPoint Value Chain Agent is in its element when it comes to products being available in the appropriate quantities, in the correct condition, at the right place and time for the proper customer and at a fitting price. Instead of painstakingly managing huge amounts of incoming data, it automatically manages WebEDI data, corrections to delivery quantities, delivery notifications, digital transport documents and assists in container management, packaging disposal or verifying returnable packaging accounts. A practical bonus: The iPoint Value Chain Agent regularly logs into the monitored portal applications, leaving behind a "digital fingerprint" and in doing so prevents potential degradation of the supplier evaluation.

... Purchasing and sales

Lists of price agreement data can only be monitored for potential variations between prices offered and those entered with a great deal of manual work. With iPoint's agent software, however, it is possible to reduce time and costs considerably. Let our software offer you support with quotation requests, quotation submittals, contract negotiations and price agreements.

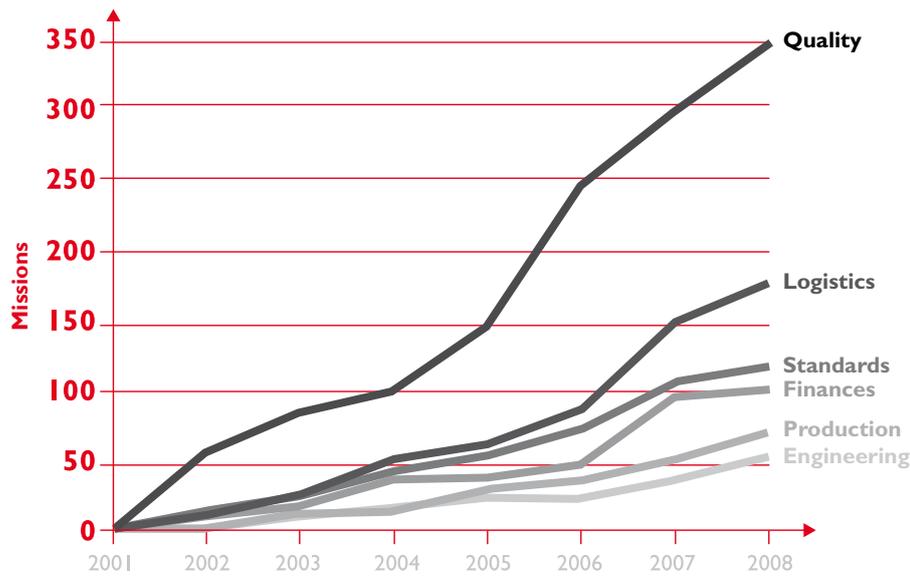
... Standards

The iPoint Value Chain Agent checks all relevant documents for changes – unbelievably fast and completely automated. As a result you only have to verify the revised passages – thanks to the integrated "Document Compare" feature the differences in the document versions are highlighted in color. The documents can also be transferred into any document management system – upon request we will even deliver a complete DMS, the iPoint Document Master.

"You can always rely on iPoint solutions, as they are dynamic, flexible, reliable and accurate – iPoint has made software development fun again."

Hans-Peter Roitsch, Mahle

Each year around 100 new iPoint missions are added



... Finances

Any company that wants to keep its budget under control has to be able to rely on correct data and figures, but also on attractive presentation. The iPoint Value Chain Agent provides all information concisely and in doing so supports your business intelligence strategy. Along with the optional components "iPoint BI monitor", there is also potential for graphic analyses which are displayed on the internet and updated automatically in the background.

... Production and Development

Supplier networks are becoming more and more complex for sophisticated products. These types of products are often made up of countless components – a car for example has thousands. And many of these parts contain numerous components from even more suppliers. This represents a huge challenge for all companies which participate in product development and assembly. Countless pieces of data from different companies and systems have to be combined. The iPoint Value Chain Agent ensures that each company sector gets the necessary information at the right time. This way you always have your processes under control even if a large number of companies are involved.

- > Intelligent, automated data retrieval
- > Optimized and bidirectional e-business processes
- > Increased process efficiency in supplier networks
- > Improved network excellence
- > Diverse data source integration
- > Greatly saves time and increases reliability
- > SAP certification
- > Considerable reduction in penalty costs
- > Optimized processes in all company sectors
- > Data exchange in real-time



Developer Suite – Mission: Possible

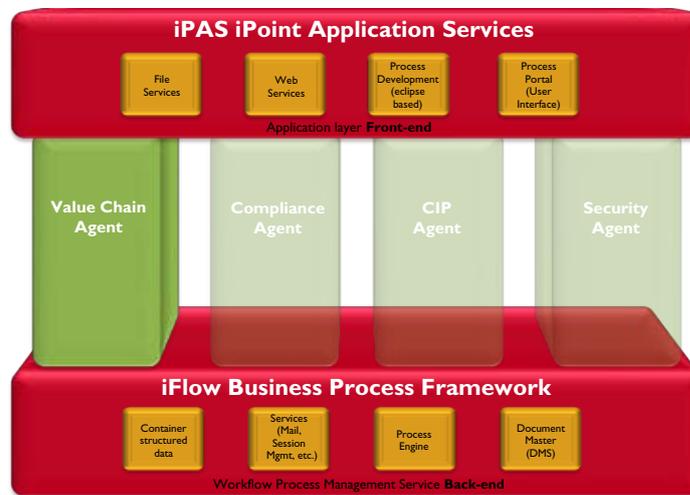
iPoint already covers a very broad range with its prefabricated and maintained missions. Nevertheless sometimes customers request custom-tailored solutions for their requirements. Developer Suite is the perfect tool for developing individual missions.

There are suppliers which use missions for internal communication between various locations. Among these missions are those that monitor competitors' portals and others that draw on public databases. Patent and competition law are just two examples. Customers can develop, test and implement missions themselves with Developer Suite.

On request customers receive complete development tools which provide everything from recording support for the simple documenting of missions at the click of a button all the way to complete Java-IDE for programming integration of complex data. Developer Suite is there to assist you every step of the way from the analysis stage right down to deployment. How does this benefit you? Processes that can be freely defined optimize integration and allow you to find the right solution for every request.



iFlow: Perfect harmony



Document Master: From doc to pdf

The Web 2.0 application manages documents in a simply way: Via the Web 2.0 user interface as well as user management integrated with AD/LDAP for automated matching of user IDs and passwords. It files its documents centrally and lets its users access them locally. If required, customers can automatically forward tasks such as clearances, notices etc. via document workflow.

Since the Document Master supports different user interfaces such as Browser, WebDAV, FTP and CIFS (virtual data system), the tool is easy to use and flexible. Automatic versioning and an integrated full text search do the rest, ensuring user friendly operating. Documents can be found quickly and easily no matter if they are available in doc, xls, pdf or another format. Practical: Documents can be automatically converted into another format. And even compiling standard forms is completed in just a couple of clicks.

- > Automated alignment of user-IDs and passwords
- > Central document storage with local access
- > Supports user interfaces such as Browser, WebDAV, FTP and CIFS (virtual data system)
- > Convenient document search regardless of format
- > Automated conversion of documents into different formats

Business Process Management: iFlow Process Engine

The iFlow Business Process Framework is the technical heart and soul of all iPoint solutions and as such safeguards information flow between all participants. The optional Process Engine enables rigid program logic to be replaced by highly flexible, dynamic processes and therefore helps to meet the high demands set by end-to-end process integration.

- > Quick reaction to changes in business processes through potential for modifying processes in runtime and modifying process templates without interfering in existing processes
- > Automated checking of incoming and outgoing data for consistency – this prevents negative impacts on runtimes
- > Universal data mapping
- > Learning aptitude from process interruptions
- > Monitoring potential with the process portal
- > High flexibility in changing source and target systems



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