



University of Wisconsin-Madison

UW E-Business Consortium

"Helping Industry Gain Competitive Advantage Through E-Commerce and E-Business"

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Project Report

Supplier Portal Strategy for Uniek: Opportunities and Best Practices

Project Sponsor

Uniek, Inc.

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Executive Summary

Uniek is a leading designer, manufacturer and marketer of home furnishing and craft products. The Company was founded in 1988, and, is headquartered in Waunakee, Wisconsin. It has become one of the largest and fastest growing suppliers of ready-made frames.

The objective of this student-team project was to assist Uniek, Inc. in developing its supplier portal strategy. Through an internal assessment of opportunities at Uniek, external research from other leading member companies in the UW E-Business Consortium, and research of portal software and development companies, the team has compiled leading practices and identified opportunities to guide the supplier portal strategy development.

The student team first focused on understanding the internal processes at Uniek. The main functional groups are marketing, engineering, procurement, manufacturing, and logistics. Through a careful assessment of these functional areas, the student team was able to understand not only the processes for these departments, but also their pain points and desired portal features. With further guidance from executives at Uniek, the team gained a thorough understanding of Uniek's internal workings and how a portal can fit within Uniek's business operations.

The next step in the process was an assessment of other Consortium companies and their use of supplier portals. A variety of companies were studied through a detailed questionnaire and additional follow-up interviews. These companies included manufacturing companies, distribution companies, and a portal development company. From these assessments, we gained insight into portal features that would be suitable for Uniek, how these features work, how to maintain a portal, how to develop a proper change management technique, what issue could arise from a portal, what companies can provide portal services, and finally, how the portal actually improved their company.

The team also investigated portal software companies and implementation resources available in the market today. This assessment provides a base for Uniek to begin searching for specific portal solutions. Finally, this report provides recommendations for Uniek for developing its supplier portal strategy and implementation roadmap.

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