



## International Catalogue Management

innogy

 Sustainable shopping:  
 Cross-catalogue and international

Sustainability also plays an increasingly important role in purchasing. The energy supplier innogy was looking for a solution to make purchasing processes efficient, sustainable and, above all, internationally uniform – and found it at Mercateo.

In 2008, the internationally active innogy SE, then still RWE AG, was searching for a partner for the catalogue hosting of its regular suppliers. In addition, the sustainable-oriented group wanted to close requirement gaps, minimise free text orders and thus optimise its purchasing processes. The special challenge here: The e-procurement functionalities were to be rolled out throughout Europe after their introduction in Germany. Mercateo met these challenges and implemented the requirements in close cooperation with the customer. Currently, the energy supplier has integrated more than 150 catalogues of its regular suppliers on the Mercateo platform with conditions negotiated by innogy. The standard requirements are supplemented by the Mercateo Shop assortment, which can be used to process rare one-off requirements in indirect purchasing via one creditor. For André

Lückert, Head of Relationship & Master Data Management at innogy, this combination was the decisive factor for the decision: "Mercateo enabled us to visualise the coverage of almost all requirements and catalogue hosting via one platform. In addition, they met our requirements for an e-procurement system."

**Sustainable purchasing across all catalogues**

The energy company has specialised in the generation of electricity from renewable energies. For this reason, sustainable action is one of innogy's corporate principles and is also reflected in indirect purchasing in efficient processes and in the selection of product ranges. A special requirement of Mercateo involved the labelling of sustainable products. However, since environmental standards could not be applied across the board to all items from the regular suppliers, every buyer in the Group's

**Mercateo Exclusive Catalogues**

Mercateo offers companies a catalogue management solution with which the catalogues of regular suppliers can be integrated as exclusive catalogues and configured completely according to their own wishes. These framework agreements are only visible in the company's exclusive, customisable area.

**Advantages:**

- ✔ Simple and convenient catalogue management
- ✔ Fast access thanks to prominent placement on the homepage
- ✔ Complete integration into Mercateo search
- ✔ Transparent conditions across the entire offer
- ✔ One platform for all purchases



»» *The local Mercateo Country Managers, who speak the local language and are also familiar with the legal bases, were an important component for a successful internationalisation.* ««

André Lückert, Head of Relationship & Master Data Management at innogy



#### innogy

Innogy generates energy from renewable sources and offers innovative energy services in areas such as storage technologies, electromobility and energy efficiency. With its three business segments Grid & Infrastructure, Sales and Renewable Energies, innogy SE addresses the requirements of a modern carbon-free, decentralised and digital energy world. Innogy's activities focus on 22 million customers.

- **Founded:** 2016
- **Industry:**  
Energy industry
- **Headquarters:**  
Essen (Germany)
- **Board of Directors:**  
Dr. Erhard Schipporeit (Chairman of the Supervisory Board), Uwe Tigges (Chief Executive Officer)
- **Number of employees:**  
42.393 (FTE 2017)
- **Annual turnover:**  
43.1 billion € (2017)
- **Website:**  
[www.innogy.com](http://www.innogy.com)

purchasing department was required to check the product range for sustainability in consultation with his suppliers and to label environmentally friendly products. "This can be recycled paper for office supplies and energy-efficient equipment for electronics. If, for example, an employee is looking for sticky notes, the most environmentally friendly ones are displayed at the top of the search result or they can select them directly," Lückert describes the procedure. At innogy, labelling as a "Green Label" was introduced, but in principle the highlighting of certain articles across all catalogues can be designed very individually. Thus, a distinction can also be made between inventory products or the individual requirements of a location. Collaboration with everyone involved is always essential for individual catalogue hosting, as André Lückert confirms: "We implemented the topic together with Mercateo right from the start and have thus grown together – on the tasks and internationally."

#### Individual internationalisation

The catalogue hosting was also the decisive basis for the energy group to roll out the purchasing solution internationally in the European subsidiaries. Not every country has the same framework conditions as in Germany. The heterogeneous system landscape was the least of the hurdles. Innogy had a unique experience in Hungary. Here, a law stipulates that every ordered material item must be included in a framework agreement. Mercateo offers the possibility to map such framework agreements on the procurement platform, a function that innogy also uses in other countries. In the meantime, innogy has introduced the Mercateo solution in seven European countries. An important insight that Lückert gained in these years: You

have to take your time for internationalisation. "The countries are very individual – something that should not be underestimated. When we speak of seven countries, we also mean seven different organisations and of course, seven different starting situations. The solution we have created here in Germany cannot be applied to all countries using the watering can principle." (see Info box "The 5 golden rules of internationalisation")

#### People make the difference

Despite all the economic and cultural differences, it was always the same important factor that led the international projects to success: the local people. They are an



innogy headquarters in Essen, Germany

## The 5 golden rules of internationalisation

André Lückert initially answered the question about the 5 golden rules to be observed when internationalising purchasing processes: "People, people, people." This makes it clear which factor is most important for international projects. He also explained the other four: "You really need to open yourself to the respective country and the differences. Even if you'd like to implement standards, you have to be flexible and at the same time you must not give the individual countries too much room for manoeuvre."

- 1. Take people with you** – you can't get anything done without them. Above all, there is a need on the ground for capable people who know the legal situation, for example.
- 2. Establish personal contact** – you have to be ready to travel and visit the people involved on site in order to exchange ideas personally. This includes spending time together outside work in order to get to know the culture better.
- 3. Be flexible and creative** – even if you want to implement standards. You have to be open to the country and the differences and deviate slightly from the standard process.
- 4. Convince and show perspectives** – only if the local people are convinced and join in can also customers ultimately be convinced. To do this, you need to show employees the ways in which opportunities can result from the change.
- 5. Always support** – no matter what the issues. It's a joint project and is a long term project.

important driver of innovation and must be brought on board right from the start. "As a buyer, I also have to get on the plane and meet my contacts in person. The worst thing about such a project," says Lückert, "are emails from the head office that indicate how to do it now." This not only applies to international project management – a visit to the construction site or the requester's workplace can help to better understand their needs (see the info box on the back page "A new generation of buyers").

### Personal support on site

International projects need a consistent basic structure, plus a great deal of flexibility when it comes to individual expansion in the respective country. In the case of innogy, Mercateo, as a long-standing

partner, formed this basic framework, with customisable catalogue hosting and experienced employees in the respective countries. "The local Mercateo Country Managers, who speak the local language and are also familiar with the legal foundations, were an important component for successful internationalisation," sums up Lückert. Together with Mercateo, the innogy buyer wishes to further expand the available product range and thus achieve almost full product range coverage. He already has new ideas for ground-breaking projects: "I'd like to offer even more services in e-procurement."

### Connecting international locations with Mercateo

Mercateo is active in 14 European countries and thus enables you to create more transparency and control in purchasing internationally. Use uniform electronic interfaces to connect your merchandise management system and benefit from a digital approval process across all locations. In this way you reduce the effort and process costs of your international procurement.

#### Advantages:

- ✔ Benefit from uniform purchasing standards for all branches
- ✔ Make use of your existing framework agreements
- ✔ Buy company-wide via one platform



Modern movement - innogy enables electric mobility in cities

### A new generation of buyers

Whereas purchasing used to be regarded as an executive organ without many shaping skills, today it has developed into an important strategic partner in the company. This is accompanied by completely new demands on the function of the buyer, as André Lückert knows from practical experience: "Today, the buyer is already much more involved in the purchasing processes. This can be of enormous importance, especially when it comes to issues such as sustainability. This of course gives him much more scope to pursue corporate goals together with users." According to Lückert, buyers today are innovation drivers and moderators in the company and should therefore have three important characteristics:

**Communicative and multilingual** – Purchasers have to communicate much more with consumers but also with suppliers. The supply market has become more international, so a good command of English is essential.

**Professionally at eye level with the requester** – buyers must know the value chain and have enormous expertise in their product groups. They should also keep an eye on the international markets. They are jointly responsible for ensuring that innovations are driven forward in cooperation with suppliers and purchasers. This is the only way to achieve a cooperative partnership with users.

**"Problem solver."** – Buyers must be able to empathise with the customer's business. You can't always do that from your own office – you also need to put on your safety boots and be on the construction site.



Mercateo is Europe's leading procurement platform for business customers on the Internet. Through Mercateo, companies can source their general business and specialist needs via a single supplier from a vast range of products. In addition, Mercateo offers many functions for efficient purchasing.

More information about Mercateo at [www.mercateo.com/corporate](http://www.mercateo.com/corporate)

Do you have any questions?



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