CASE STUDY

ESSITY EVOLVES ITS BUSINESS WITH INRULE

"InRule has evolved our ways of working. This has helped us to be more competitive and work smarter."

Dana Elkin – Assortment & Forecasting Mgr NA

A global leading hygiene and health company headquartered in Sweden, Essity – formerly SCA – has been operating in the hygiene sector since 1975. Through acquisitions and consolidations, its roots actually stretch as far back as 1849. A business that produces essentials and necessities, the Essity name was formed from these two words.

Today, the company employs more than 47,000 people and generates revenue exceeding 120 billion SEK. With its main office in Stockholm, Sweden, Essity has market-leading brands in Europe, North America, Latin America and Asia.

ESSITY'S JOURNEY

Already a market leader in Europe, Essity also enjoys a strong position in the US, competing there with some of the biggest brands in the professional hygiene industry. In order to remain competitive in a large market with other established players, it needs to work smartly.

Dana Elkin, Assortment & Forecasting Manager, North America at Essity US, describes its way of working and how InRule has affected its day-to-day business.

Previously, a majority of work tasks were carried out manually. Essity has since identified the need for a more structured and digital way of working.

One process prioritized during its digital journey was the installation of towel, toilet paper and skincare dispensers at different locations. This process, formerly managed manually to a great extent, led to unnecessary errors and waste. The need for a digital tool to support installation coordinators, sales teams and installers became painfully apparent. With a background as computer consultant and programmer, Dana identified this need.

"We wanted a more consistent way of being able to capture data instead of managing the processes manually as done in the past. At the same time, we wanted something that would drive the process forward." Dana Elkin

WORK SMARTER AND FASTER

Working manually represented a huge challenge because of the need to chase down data through different departments and vendors. Dispenser installments consist of a number of touch points, including

> *"The only tracking mechanisms we had were spreadsheets and e-mails – a huge time thief, sending material back and forth around the organization, and people not understanding how to populate the fields with the correct information. You can only do that for so long."*
>
> *Dana Elkin*

departments and vendors. This meant the challenge to compile all necessary information was carried out by only one person, the installation coordinator, who had to rely on open, free-form text, e-mail and spreadsheets – not ideal tools for a structured way of gathering data.

A system that would allow Essity to work smarter and be more competitive was clearly called for. Due to the complexity of the process, it was crucial that the process run smoothly, with everyone getting the right information at the right time.

WHY INRULE?

InRule, a previous vendor to its other branches, was shortlisted as a viable option. While analyzing InRule, it didn't take long for the team to understand the potential benefits the platform would bring them. The most important factor in choosing InRule's platform was its ability to capture all the different data sets and pull data from InRule, turning it into actionable insights and dashboards. This, combined with the flexibility in InRule to make changes to meet the business needs, was a true game-changer.

Without IT support, manual tasks would still be very much present. With data stored in different network folders, chasing information would still be an issue. Like most companies, Essity has to be smart about its resources. It didn't have a group of developers on hold, ready to jump on a project like this. The solution had to be simple, implementing and developing a smooth interface to streamline the experience for clients and end-users.

In the process of finding a suitable vendor, other solutions and vendors were evaluated. However, they didn't fit the need. In the end, InRule proved to be the right way to go.

"The relationship with InRule had already been established in our branches in Europe and we heard good things about InRule from our colleagues there. This helped us to start up at a jogging pace rather than a slow crawl because we already had a sense about how to make it fit." Dana Elkin

Another aspect that helped drive the decision is that InRule is hosted in the cloud, which enables flexibility. Instead of a "ready-to-use" solution off the shelf that would entail having to adjust to its ways of working, InRule allowed making modifications where needed.

IMPLEMENTATION: GETTING UP & GOING

From the very inception of the idea to having an application up and running took a mere five months. Most of this time involved cementing the internal processes and mapping out the needs. Once a dialogue started up with an InRule expert, things really took off.

The solution not only matched Essity's expectations, it exceeded them. They built on something close to what was needed and matched it to their specific ways of working. This is one of the strengths of InRule: the flexibility when it comes to building tailored solutions, adjusted to a client's unique ways of working.

One important step for Essity was the pilot, which was rolled out on a number of sales department

> *"As a former computer consultant, I know how long these types of projects can take. We had great collaboration with our InRule contact and a small team from Essity, which really helped propel the speed and accuracy of implementation."*
>
> *Dana Elkin*

> *"We didn't realize how beneficial this would be for us. This has really proven to be a great asset for all parties involved."*
>
> *Dana Elkin*

employees to make sure it worked smoothly. They knew how to use it and appreciated it. This process took approximately three months before rolling it out to the rest of the organization in the US and Canada.

BENEFITS: SOLID VALUE

One of the biggest benefits was the time-saving aspect the InRule platform offered. Employees who previously had to chase down data while trying to coordinate the process were able to be much more efficient with their time. This became apparent when one of the installation coordinators was able to take his vacation without worrying about falling behind.

Among all the features in InRule, one stands out. It may not seem like a big deal, but hands-off emailing and auto-reminders to all parties have brought about enormous change. This is especially true for the installation coordinators who are very dependent on reporting and other information. Links in the e-mails are sent directly to the appropriate body, eliminating the need to go searching and spending valuable time on routine or administrative work tasks.

Dana also highlighted the impact InRule has had on their data, which is now controlled. Data validation, previously done manually and extremely time-consuming if not impossible, now, with rules in place, ensures everyone fills in the correct data.

InRule has also helped improve communication and its overview: from e-mail file management funnels to full disclosure of all bodies. Being able to see everything going on at any given time is of immense value to the team.

"The simple menu interface enables us to quickly review lists that report on progress. We instantly know if we are waiting on something, and this has allowed us to get our hand on the pulse of the project. These vital checks throughout the process are highly efficient, and something we didn't have before." Dana Elkin

This has allowed greater transparency, efficiency and focus on more value-adding tasks.

By working more efficiently, Essity has become more competitive. They're now able to carry out more site surveys and more value-adding work by the team, such as carrying on deeper conversations with their customers. As a whole, they've gained clearer insights into their own business, as well as their customer needs.

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InRule has also improved cost control by being able to calculate the costs for each installation, including travel costs, accommodation and actual work done at the location. Previously, installation costs were often under-estimated. Increased accuracy has empowered them to prioritize and select the projects to focus on. Not only is this valuable for the coordinators, but also for the sales teams and management.

"We're now able to capture aspects, such as knowing if we're doing a good job, as well as how we're performing as a company at this very moment. Incredibly valuable for us is being able to analyze our ways of working and identify areas for improvement."

Dana Elkin

By working in iterations, ways of working have improved, step by step. The journey is far from over however, and Dana is just getting started with InRule, feeding data into business intelligence software.

NEXT STEPS

Essity is also currently analyzing the use of mobile features, which would allow employees greater thoroughness while inspecting sites. One step to increase precision in their evaluation of a site is by taking pictures, which would serve as information for the rest of the company as to what is needed for specific customers.

Being a data lover, the next step for Dana is to use the data in InRule to build more dashboards that can function as a foundation for actionable insights. They've come a long way already, yet there's always room for something new.

Furthermore, the digital onboarding process will be refined further and streamlined. At the top of the list is a role-driven function that will simplify for managers to assign correct tools, access, and permissions. These enhancements will also include integrations to other systems that will allow them to follow up, monitor, manage, and archive with greater ease.

We look forward to following and enabling Essity's automation journey!