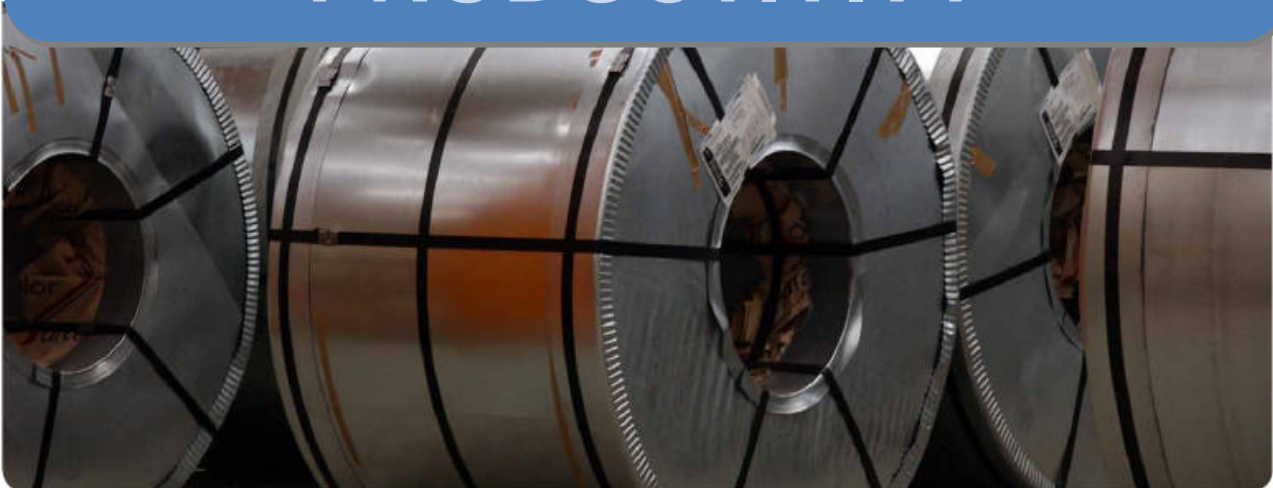


# ENHANCING ARCELORMITTAL PRODUCTIVITY



## TECHNOLOGY SOLID AS STEEL WITH M-SOFT

Yvo van Werde could never have imagined that the visionary system he helped to pioneer 19 years ago would be the very same system that today empowers the company to provide unparalleled service to its customers. But for the supply chain manager, Logistics, of the ArcelorMittal Distribution Solutions (AMDS) division for Europe, that is precisely what happened.

Today, AMDS is using the M-Soft solution for steel distribution developed by M-Soft NV, a Progress Application Partner, in a major part of the warehouses and sales organizations across Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. The M-Soft solution is used for every operation across the division including logistics, sales and accounting. "We only have one IT system; we rely on M-Soft to manage the logistics of our business from start to finish," says Van Werde.



### CHALLENGE

*Run an agile, efficient business in an increasingly complex market*

### SOLUTION

*M-Soft solution for Steel, developed by M-Soft NV*

### BENEFIT

*Reduced order processing, transport planning costs and costs associated with its credit control process—all by 50%*

Software solid as Steel



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## M-SOFT SOLUTION FOR STEEL, BORN FROM THE STEEL INDUSTRY



In 1986, M-Soft was founded as the Information Technology division of the Belgian steel company Metalim, which later became an ArcelorMittal Distribution Division. M-Soft developed one of the first ERP solutions exclusively designed for the steel and metal distribution and treatment niche. Since 2004 the company has been privately owned, and today it serves clients across Europe.

“M-Soft knows the industry better than any other software provider because it was born directly out of the steel industry. Over the years the company has continued to evolve the solution to meet our unique needs and the changes in the market. For example, the item and parameter settings feature is designed for the unique characteristics and needs of the steel and metal industry; furthermore, M-Soft ERP enables sales representatives and other users to perform customized treatment of steel, such as cutting at a specific angle”

Real-world experience is very often the best teacher. Van Werde believes that M-Soft’s history and first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of a steel distribution business are what make the M-Soft solution for Steel such a powerful and unique solution.

“We are a distribution business, not a steel mill. Manufacturing and distribution are two completely different businesses with very different requirements when it comes to an ERP system. Other leading software providers don’t understand this distinction. They think they can modify their systems designed for steel mills to meet our needs, but clearly they just don’t understand our business.”

## A SOLID FOUNDATION WITH PROGRESS OPENEDGE

From the very beginning, M-Soft has relied on Progress to deliver a competitive platform for its solution. “M-Soft is absolutely the most developed and agile steel distribution solution on the market;

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*“We only have one IT system; we rely on M-Soft to manage the logistics of our business from start to finish.”*

*Yvo van Werde  
Supply Chain Manager,  
Logistics  
ArcelorMittal Distribution  
Solutions (AMDS)*

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the underlying Progress® OpenEdge® database is a major contributor to that fact,” says Van Werde.

Unlike other market leading technologies, the M-Soft solution for Steel is incredibly flexible, so it can easily support the needs of the smallest to the largest organization. “Because of the structure of the database we were able to build very good reporting. So we have all the data we need, more than most IT solutions can provide and everything our management team requires. To measure is to know. If you can’t manage your data correctly you can’t manage correctly.”

Because Progress OpenEdge is so flexible, AMDS also has the freedom to modify its business operations without worrying about technology constraints. “Whether you are a large or small operation, you have to be an agile business to succeed. With Progress OpenEdge we have the business agility to change and grow without having to worry about ripping out our existing system or investing in a major system overhaul. OpenEdge also easily integrates and communicates with third-party systems. And it is completely reliable; we never have to worry about our business being down.”

Low total cost of ownership remains a strength of Progress OpenEdge, says Van Werde. “Progress alone has substantially reduced our costs. Compared to other market-leading solutions the expenses associated with OpenEdge are least 30% lower. One significant reason is that unlike most systems we don’t have a dedicated database administrator.”

## **AN AGILE BUSINESS WITH M-SOFT IS A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE**

Van Werde pauses for a moment when asked about the benefits his organization has received from using M-Soft. “There are so many advantages to using this solution it is hard to narrow them down.”



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**Real-time reliable information:** As a sales driven operation, it is critical that AMDS' sales professionals have access to real-time information.

“To meet our customers' needs and expectations it is paramount that our employees have immediate visibility into stock levels, not what they were five minutes ago. That requires a highly responsive system and an extremely reliable database. With our old system we lost approximately one day of data every year. Since using the M-Soft and Progress solution we have never lost any data, none at all. That is essential to the success of our business.”

**All in one screen:** AMDS' goal is to offer the best product, superior customer experience, fastest service and the best follow-up in the industry.

“We are able to deliver on these goals because M-Soft provides our sales professionals with all of the information they need in one intuitive GUI. It is essential that they have what they need at their fingertips and on one screen—information about product availability, transportation information, treatment options, financial data, etc. This has truly optimized our sales process and greatly improved productivity. It takes us 50% less time to process an order today with M-Soft versus competitive solutions.”

M-Soft's GUI makes it quicker and easier for sales professionals to find the information that is relevant to their needs. For example “the seller doesn't need to know how much is in stock, but just that there is enough in stock to meet a customer's needs. Using colors, our system can let them know if the items they need are in stock, in stock but not in the quantity to meet the customer's requirements, or out of stock. They receive this information with just a glance at the screen. That improves the productivity of working with the system and our quality of customer service.” Van Werde says the system is so intuitive and easy to use that within two-to-three days a new employee can be taking orders and contributing to the company's bottom line.

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*“M-Soft is absolutely the most developed and agile steel distribution solution on the market; the underlying Progress OpenEdge database is a major contributor to that fact.”*

Yvo van Werde

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**Distribution software designed to allow treatments of steel:**

The way M-Soft delivers information via one integrated, user friendly screen has proven to be a competitive advantage for AMDS. “Compared to our competition, we run a much more nimble business. We can provide the same services others do but at a lower internal cost.” The company is also able to provide a level of service unmatched by the competition. “Often, our customers will need us to perform some kind of customized treatment on the steel. With M-Soft our sales professionals can actually design how the steel should be cut, where the hole should go, the angle of the cut, etc. A generic product isn’t capable of handling this kind of customization; what we are able to do is unique.”

**Automatic multi-language support:** Another thing that comes to his mind is M-Soft’s Multi-language capabilities. “This is absolutely essential for an international business. To be efficient and accurate employees must receive information in their native language.” M-Soft presents employees with information in an easy-to-use graphical user interface (GUI). Any information that is entered into the system or any paperwork generated from the system is automatically translated into whatever language is required. It is easy to add additional languages, increasing ADMS’ agility to work in different countries and with different partners.

**Optimized transport planning:** M-Soft has significantly improved the AMDS B/NI (distribution part) central transport process. The division has offices and warehouses stretched across numerous countries and locations. Products often move inter-company from warehouse to warehouse, for example, if a special treatment is required. With M-Soft they can easily manage and track those movements. The system also has the ability to delegate to the sales people which warehouse their order should come from to ensure the lowest transportation costs.

Prior to using M-Soft, AMDS had one person in every warehouse managing transport planning. The company has dramatically reduced the number of people dedicated to the function and slashed its associated

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*“Compared to our competition, we run a much more nimble business. We can provide the same services others do but at a lower internal cost”*

*Yvo van Werde*

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costs while improving the process and its customer service levels. "Since using M-Soft we have reduced our planning costs by 50%.

**Streamlined credit control process:** Every sales order AMDS processes requires credit control. "We used to have one person in each warehouse manage credit control. Today, only one person in each country is required to perform this job. In the Netherlands and Belgium we reduced our overhead by three people and slashed our costs by 50%."

## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PARTNER AND A VENDOR

To achieve results like those AMDS has realized, Van Werde says companies should not be afraid to make changes to their organization to maximize their IT solution. "There is more value to a solution than just low IT costs. If you want to truly optimize your business, you need to take full advantage of the potential of your solution; doing so may require that you adopt new best practices and implement new processes." Van Werde says M-Soft has been instrumental in AMDS' success. "They are a true partner to us, not just a technology vendor. I have worked with many of the people at M-Soft for over 19 years, and we continue to have a collaborative relationship. They possess more information and knowledge about what is behind the system, and we are able to share our real world experience of using the system in an organization. I like to say they make the car we have drawn but we drive in it. It is always a two-way flow, and that is exactly what you want in a technology partner."



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## ARCELORMITTAL

ArcelorMittal is the world's number one steel company, present in more than 60 countries and earning revenues in 2008 of \$124.9 billion. Headquartered in Luxembourg, the company represents approximately 10% of world steel output.

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## M-SOFT N.V.



M-Soft N.V. was founded in 1986 as the Information Technology division of the Belgian steel company Metalim, which later became an ArcelorMittal Distribution Division. M-Soft developed one of the first ERP solutions especially for the niche of steel distribution & service center, actually still in use by more units of the ArcelorMittal group. This solution is now called M-Soft-Steel (M-S-S). Since 2004 the company is privately owned and keeps supplying, no longer in exclusivity, the ERP solution to more ArcelorMittal Distribution Divisions in certain regions as well as to new clients in Europe active both in the steel and non ferrous metal distribution, as well as service and de-coiling centres. Today M-Soft Steel is an international solution both sold and serviced directly to European clients but also, in the coming future, by local partners in different countries in Europe and abroad. For more information visit: [www.msoft.be](http://www.msoft.be).




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## PROGRSS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that enables enterprises to be operationally responsive to changing conditions and customer interactions as they occur. Our goal is to enable our customers to capitalize on new opportunities, drive greater efficiencies, and reduce risk. Progress offers a comprehensive portfolio of best-in-class infrastructure software spanning event-driven visibility and real-time response, open integration, data access and integration, and application development and management --all supporting on-premises and SaaS/cloud deployments. Progress maximizes the benefits of operational responsiveness while minimizing IT complexity and total cost of ownership.

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