

# COM DEV

Space hardware manufacturer saves hundreds of thousands of dollars annually by integrating the Adobe® Intelligent Document Platform with SAP software

## COM DEV

- The largest Canadian-based designer and manufacturer of space hardware subsystems
- Headquarters: Cambridge, Ontario, Canada
- Revenues: \$91 million
- Employees: more than 730 worldwide
- Founded: 1974
- [www.comdev.ca](http://www.comdev.ca)

## INDUSTRY

Space Satellite Hardware Engineering and Manufacturing

## SOLUTION

- Electronic Forms Completion
- Electronic Document Routing and Approval

## PRODUCTS USED

- Adobe Form Designer
- Adobe Workflow Server

## Company Profile

COM DEV facilities in Canada and the United Kingdom manufacture advanced products and subsystems for use in communications, space science, remote sensing, and military satellites. The company's technologies provide the critical transponder filtering and switching required by satellite operators. COM DEV products are also used on high-power television broadcast satellites and will soon provide onboard processing for the next-generation multimedia Internet satellites.

Central to COM DEV's efforts to reduce development costs and speed time to market for its innovative systems is giving the company's design, engineering, configuration management, and manufacturing teams rapid access to current product information. To help improve the quality and reliability of the product data in its SAP system, COM DEV adopted the Adobe Intelligent Document Platform.

## Challenges Faced

- Streamline data capture into SAP
- Speed creation of new part numbers
- Automate existing processes and minimize product data errors

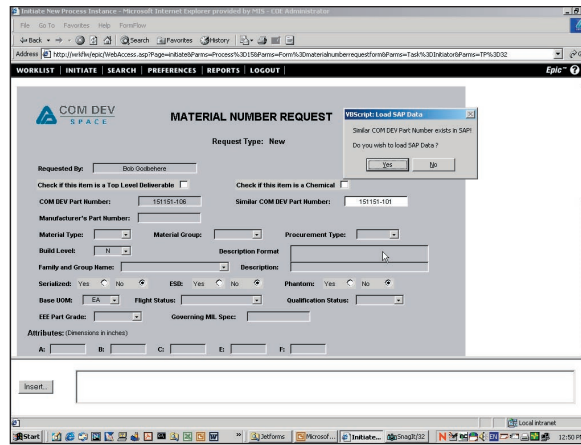
SAP Material Master stores engineering and manufacturing data vital for product development. While many COM DEV groups, including engineering, configuration management, quality assurance, and procurement, need fast access to this data, updating information in SAP can be time-consuming and tedious as employees work through dozens of data input screens. As a result, COM DEV staff often used paper forms to review and approve product data; once the data was approved, it was manually entered into the SAP system by a few employees familiar with the system. To improve the process of entering data into SAP, COM DEV wanted to simplify and automate the SAP data input processes.

To help ensure that all departments have access to reliable product data, information submitted to SAP must be approved by multiple individuals. Traditionally, COM DEV routed the relevant paper documents, such as forms for creating part numbers, to the requisite individuals for review. Once the new part numbers were approved, they would be entered manually into SAP Material Master. With thousands of new part numbers being created monthly, the administrative costs for this process totaled hundreds of thousands of dollars annually. In addition, delays and errors were common due to misplaced documents or miskeyed product numbers.

"It could take weeks to get new part numbers approved," says Perry Edmundson, P. Eng., manager of design automation at COM DEV. "We needed to automate our processes for approving and entering data into SAP while shielding employees from the complexity of the system."

COM DEV product information residing in multiple SAP modules and in multiple company documents had to be retrieved from these various sources manually. This caused delays and increased the chance of errors, driving up costs due to inaccurate information. To improve data quality and employee access to current information, COM DEV wanted an automated system that would enable staff to enter and approve product data once, and have the data be immediately available across related systems.

Using the Adobe Intelligent Document Platform, COM DEV has streamlined the submission and approval of product data and the process of incorporating it into the company's SAP systems. Employees can input part data into interactive electronic forms that verify the accuracy of the type of information entered into the fields. The system has reduced costs and improved the quality of data available to employees.



**“With Adobe solutions, we’ve seen costly errors decrease and employee productivity rise. The intelligent forms help speed product development by supporting faster approval and input of product data into our enterprise systems.”**

Perry Edmundson,  
P. Eng. Manager, Design Automation,  
COM DEV

## RESULTS

- Achieved full return on investment (ROI) in only five months by reducing administrative costs by hundreds of thousands of dollars annually
- Increased workforce productivity by shortening the time required to enter and approve new part numbers in SAP from several days to a few minutes
- Improved the accuracy of product data by eliminating data entry errors
- Enhanced employee collaboration on product development

## Success Strategy

COM DEV adopted the Adobe Intelligent Document Platform to streamline submitting and approving product data and incorporating it into the company's enterprise systems, including SAP Material Master, SAP Document Information Record, and SAP Production Resources/Tools. Instead of using dozens of SAP screens, employees can now access a few intuitive, Web-based Adobe forms to input data into the SAP system. The interactive forms present only the fields required to complete the tasks at hand, such as creating new part numbers or updating design information. If approval is needed, intelligent processes automatically route the forms to the appropriate people for review.

“The electronic forms integrate seamlessly with SAP and our other applications, so we can easily read and write data to our enterprise systems,” says Bob Godbehere, general facility services manager at COM DEV. The Adobe Intelligent Document processes also enable COM DEV staff to automatically route forms, notify project team members about changes, and escalate document review to supervisors when problems arise. Once actions—such as requests for new part numbers or design changes—are approved, the new content is updated instantly in all the relevant SAP modules.

## Results

The streamlined entry and approval of product information into enterprise systems saves COM DEV hundreds of thousands of dollars annually and improves the quality of data available to employees. “With Adobe solutions, we’ve seen costly errors decrease and employee productivity rise,” says Edmundson. “The intelligent forms help speed product development by supporting faster approval and input of product data into our enterprise systems.”

The Adobe Intelligent Document Platform processes have enabled COM DEV to replace paper-based workflows for creating new part numbers with automated workflows; now, creating new part numbers takes minutes instead of days. Employees can enter part data into interactive electronic forms that verify the accuracy of the type of information entered into the fields. Drop-down menus on the forms also restrict the field values to valid entries only, helping ensure the accuracy of the data. In addition, the intelligent documents checks the form data against information already in SAP to prevent problems that would occur from erroneous duplication of product data.

“The Adobe solutions deliver rapid ROI and support efficient sharing of product information across project teams,” says Godbehere. “With intelligent electronic Adobe forms, we’ve improved the quality of data in enterprise systems and substantially reduced product development costs.”

**Adobe Systems Incorporated**  
345 Park Avenue, San Jose, CA 95110-2704 USA  
[www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)

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