**Practical 6**

**Aim: CASE STUDY.**

**Introduction:**

**[Interactive Trade Center B.V.](http://www.itc-bv.com/" \o "http://www.itc-bv.com)** (ITC-BV) is an online retail company based in Utrecht, the Netherlands. Established in 2006, the company offers several lines of consumer products through the Internet, both directly to consumers and to other businesses. ITC-BV is a virtual company whose success depends on close cooperation with several strategic partners. One of these strategic partners provides the logistical support, including inventory management and order fulfillment. Such an arrangement allowed ITC-BV to focus on its core competence of creating online businesses. As ITC-BV grew, however, collaboration with its fulfillment partner became increasingly difficult due to the lack of a robust, automated system. The large number of errors in order processing and low efficiency in fulfillment prevented ITC-BV from growing into new product lines and market niches.

As a result, the management of ITC-BV decide to seek a better solution to enhance cooperation with its strategic partners. Even though Interactive Trade Center B.V. was a relatively small company with limited resources at the time, its management viewed the choice of a technology platform as a crucial long term business decision. It considered both commercial solutions, such as SAP Business One, and open source alternatives, including [**opentaps Open Source ERP + CRM**](http://www.opentaps.org/). After examining the features and usability of the systems, ITC-BV selected opentaps for its lower cost of ownership, flexibility, and ease of use. It began by using the warehouse and CRM modules of opentaps immediately and gradually brought online more functionality and integrated opentaps with its existing sales channels. Overall, ITC-BV took more than a year to get all its activities into opentaps Open Source ERP + CRM through a process of continuous training and improvements.

With the opentaps open source Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, Interactive Trade Center BV has gained a significant advantage over its competitors. By connecting all activities within the organization, opentaps has helped ITC-BV realize important savings by automating business processes. It has also helped ITC-BV outsource more of its activities to partners and create greater value for its customers. Therefore, in a little over a year after beginning its implementation of opentaps, ITC-BV has already reached the "sweet spot" of achieving greater efficiency with minimal additional effort.

**Some specific ways that opentaps has helped ITC-BV include:**

* The warehouse management functionality within opentaps has given ITC-BV its biggest advantages. With opentaps, sales orders are automatically imported into the system, and the fully automated warehouse management generates order picking lists automatically. Barcode scanners are used with opentaps to identify products quickly. Products received by assigned employees are scanned into opentaps, and the stock is automatically updated in real time. This has greatly reduced the chance for errors within the warehouse. At the same time, employees can process the incoming orders much more quickly. Finally, up-to-date inventory levels are reflected on ITC-BV's online retail stores.
* With opentaps CRM, ITC-BV can now connect its customer service and order fulfillment partners directly with its customers. By linking emails with customer accounts, opentaps allows customer service representative to see the history of customer requests and which ones have already been processed versus pending. The planned integration with [**Asterisk VOIP**](http://www.asterisk.org/) will further enhance the ability of the customer service department to manage its customer contacts via the Internet telephony, instead of relying on traditional the telephone exchange.
* Finally, the integrated accounting and financial mangement in opentaps has allowed ITC-BV to access financial results such as trial balances, cash flow statements, and other reports on demand with live data. This has helped ITC-BV better understand its financial results.

With opentaps, ITC-BV has become a more efficient online retailer. opentaps has freed ITC-BV from the traditional constraints imposed by physical locations and resources and allowed it to connect with its business partners and customers online. opentaps has also helped ITC-BV structure and organize its internal business data more effectively with its rigorous data models, and this serves as a foundation for ITC-BV to integrate with more partners and online sales channels.