

# Corporate Express, Inc.



## Cutting Costs and Winning Customers with Ariba Supplier Network



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– Brock Hirschman  
Director, eBusiness Services  
Corporate Express, Inc.

### Customer Profile

Corporate Express, Inc., a subsidiary of Buhrmann, NV, is one of the world’s largest suppliers of office and computer products and services. The company works on a purely business-to-business basis and sees direct distribution as key to helping customers slash process-related procurement costs. Corporate Express also strives to streamline the supply chain through integrated IT solutions and intelligent eCommerce tools, and conducts over 75 percent of its sales online.

### The Challenge

Corporate Express made the decision to begin transacting over Ariba® Supplier Network™ in 1999. “Some of our larger customers had acquired the Ariba platform and were driving us to integrate with it,” says Brock Hirschman, director of eBusiness services. Because Corporate Express serves a wide range of global customers with varied and complex requirements, solution flexibility was crucial. The need to automate and streamline order placement and follow-up was also important to help Ariba customers gain efficiency and cut costs.

### The Solution

Corporate Express built the Ariba Supplier Network integration on its existing Webmethods foundation and utilized its customizable E-Way eCommerce platform to enable the site for its Ariba® Ready™ PunchOut™ solution. “The PunchOut site is highly configurable, so it supports branding and other customer-specific information,” Hirschman says. Standard features within the E-Way platform such as robust search technology, online shopping lists, and a unique accessory finder feature help users

quickly locate products they need. Electronic orders are routed to Corporate Express’s back-end system, and status updates are available on Ariba Supplier Network, eliminating the need for follow-up calls or faxes. These capabilities have helped streamline eProcurement efforts. “Rather than having to create multiple one-off integrations through EDI, a VAN, or some other method, Ariba Supplier Network gives us a single point of integration to customers using Ariba spend management solutions,” Hirschman says.

The solution also helps Corporate Express meet diverse customer needs. “Every implementation has some form of customization to it, and Ariba Supplier Network gives us yet another way to meet specific customer requirements,” Hirschman says. “For instance, we can map any category of data and include it on all their documents and reports.” The same fields can be used for search, filter, or invoicing purposes.

As an Ariba Supplier Advantage member, Corporate Express has leveraged the flexibility and functionality Ariba Supplier Network provides to cut implementation times significantly. “Enabling our site for PunchOut was a relatively small effort,” Hirschman notes. “Our average time to set up PunchOut with a customer is now less than a day, with complete integration in about two weeks.”

### Adding Up the Benefits

“The ease and speed of integrating with Ariba Supplier Network and the accuracy it provides have provided Corporate Express the opportunity to increase our customer base by integrating those customers that already use Ariba,” Hirschman says. And the cost of sales and order fulfillment is much lower than with off-line methods. “The consistent upgrading of services offered on Ariba Supplier Network and the expanded functionality it provides help us exceed customer expectations,” Hirschman concludes.

