

Mastering customer data quality & governance ahead of a global CRM update

Business Services | Global

Elis is a leading French group in circular workplace services, offering sustainable, tailor-made rental and maintenance solutions for professional textile care, hygiene, and well-being equipment. With 54,000 employees across 29 countries and over €4 billion in annual revenue, Elis serves nearly 400,000 customers around the world. To better serve its international footprint and streamline its sales operations, the company embarked on a digital transformation centered around implementing a unified global CRM system provided by Salesforce.

But before Salesforce could be rolled out across the group, it became clear Elis needed to address the fragmented, inconsistent, and incomplete customer data across its regions and systems. Legacy CRMs lacked integration with production tools, sales handoffs were manual and error-prone, and as much as 25–30% of customer data was either missing from the MDM or of low quality.

Rather than building a CRM on top of unreliable data, Elis launched a comprehensive master data initiative to consolidate, cleanse, and govern customer information across global operations. They selected Semarchy xDM as the central hub for customer data unification, positioning the business for more efficient sales processes, improved customer experiences, and better integration with the rest of the enterprise application landscape. With support from implementation partner Clever Age, Semarchy xDM was chosen for its ability to deliver multi-domain MDM, flexible integrations with regional systems, and role-based workflows for distributed stewardship.

CHALLENGES:

Inconsistent and incomplete customer data across countries and systems made it difficult for Elis to see a holistic view of customers.

Key challenges included:

- **Fragmented data sources:** Multiple legacy platforms across 29 countries contributed to inconsistent and incomplete customer records in varying formats and standards.
- **Manual processes and data loss:** Sales teams worked across disconnected CRM instances with manual data entry during handoffs to operational teams, leading to frequent data loss and poor customer visibility.
- **Low data accountability:** With transparent data governance, quality checks were minimal, and ownership was diffuse.
- **Lack of interoperability:** Diverse local data providers complicated integration and hindered the vision of a unified CRM ecosystem.

Decoupled CRM from operational systems

with a centralized, MDM-driven data foundation for global Salesforce deployment

Improved data quality and completeness

with AI-assisted cleansing, local stewardship, and unified customer records

Enabled cross-functional agility

by standardizing data and sharing golden records across CRM, portals, and billing systems

"There is now a virtuous effect since the golden data is returned to the operational system and to Salesforce."

Gilles Corcos,
CIO of Sales & Marketing at Elis Group

BUSINESS DRIVERS:

To ensure the success of its new global Salesforce CRM and improve overall customer intelligence, Elis defined objectives to put customer data at the heart of business processes.

Primary drivers included:

- **Guarantee CRM independence and consistency:** Decouple customer data from siloed systems to create a centralized, CRM-agnostic hub.
- **Harmonize business processes and standards across geographies:** Enable a unified sales approach from lead to onboarding, eliminating duplicate entry and customer friction.
- **Streamline CRM handoffs:** Link customer, operational, and production systems with clean, synchronized data.
- **Enable data sharing:** Facilitate integration between customer portals, IAM, marketing automation, and billing systems.
- **Decentralized data responsibility:** Empower local teams to take ownership of quality assurance and governance, training them to manage data quality within defined scopes.
- **Maintain ongoing data health:** Implement stewardship and automation for long-term business agility.
- **Build a system that supports multi-domain MDM:** Incorporate AI-driven automation and seamless integration with varied data providers.

SOLUTION:

After a competitive evaluation, Elis selected Semarchy xDM as the central hub for customer master data across all business units. The project began with an initial deployment in the Netherlands, with implementation support from Clever Age, which served as both a pilot and a validation of Semarchy's adaptability to different data providers and regional requirements.

Key solution components and outcomes included:

- **Standardized global data:** Semarchy xDM unified customer data across legacy systems and external providers, enabling a single, trusted version of each record.
- **Localized data stewardship:** Country-specific data stewards were trained on Semarchy to manage, review, and approve golden records with region-specific visibility and responsibilities.
- **AI-powered cleansing:** A new "data cleansing" initiative used LLM-based AI to automate quality improvement suggestions, accelerating the process and reducing manual workload.
- **CRM independence:** The MDM hub served as the authoritative source for customer data, ensuring Salesforce could scale globally without duplicating data logic.
- **Multi-domain expansion:** Following the success with customer data, Elis can begin applying MDM to other areas such as location tracking, part traceability, and site management.

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"Once these management rules have been identified, the goal is to transfer them to the MDM. This is a virtuous circle between AI and MDM. Our goal was to continue reducing costs and saving time to allow data stewards to focus on higher value-added tasks."

Guillaume Lamboley

IT CRM Domain Manager at Elis Group