ABAS

FASTER REALIZATION OF CUSTOMER REQUESTS WITH GROUND-BREAKING APPLICATIONS

INDUSTRY
- Mechanical and plant engineering
- Make-to-order production

PRODUKCTS
Rinsing machines and systems, cleaning and disinfection systems

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
2300

LICENSES
324

USES ABAS SINCE
2008

LOCATIONS THAT USE ABAS
Germany, Australia, China, Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey

WEBSEITE
www.meiko.de

PROJEKTHIGHLIGHTS
- abas ERP supports international growth
- abas used in Germany, Australia, China, and Austria, USA to follow
- Use of the mobile app with access to abas ERP and abas CRM from anywhere
- A contingent planning tool for production/order processing is used as an extension

**MEIKO goes mobile: The plant engineering company based in Offenburg realizes customer requests more quickly with groundbreaking plug-ins and apps, and strengthens the feeling of togetherness with a uniform ERP system.
The fast-growing company from the Baden region puts its money on an effective IT infrastructure to integrate sites around the world with the parent company.**

It's a classic success story that began in 1927: A small 5-person workshop grew into a global industrial enterprise with more than 2,300 employees. From their headquarters in Offenburg, Germany, MEIKO rinsing and disinfection systems conquer the world market. MEIKO has become a world champion in cleaning, rinsing, and disinfection. MEIKO dishwashers are found in the kitchens of luxury liners, upscale hotels, major restaurants, and cafeterias. MEIKO cleaning and disinfection systems eliminate germs in hospitals, laboratories, and nursing wards. MEIKO counts on sustainability, resource conservation, and efficiency with its products.

In 2007 the ERP system at MEIKO reached its limits. The midsize enterprise from Baden-Württemberg, rapidly expanding abroad, decided to acquire new ERP software and to transform the IT infrastructure. Establishing high-performance, secure structures that will grow with the business was the goal, for example, so that new sites at home and abroad can be more easily integrated with the data center in Offenburg. The new IT structure and ERP software had to provide a secure platform for day-to-day operations on the one hand and, on the other hand, to actively support new trends such as mobility.

CUSTOMIZATION WHILE MAINTAINING RELEASE COMPATIBILITY, SME ORIENTATION, AND PARTNER NETWORKS WERE DECISIVE FACTORS.

In the search for a new ERP system with an intensive pre-qualification phase, the plant engineering firm held extensive workshops, each lasting more than a day, respectively for three chosen ERP providers. "It was a lot of effort, but we wanted to review the systems very carefully in order to find software that would be viable for the coming years," reports Walter Armbruster, CIO of the MEIKO Group Global. MEIKO chose abas ERP, counting on „the flexibility of abas regarding customization while maintaining release compatibility. That was a key reason for choosing this software. Our experiences with the previously used software in this regard were not the best," Walter Armbruster sums up. "The defined SME orientation was another important decision criterion. We also liked that abas has certified partners in 32 countries, who carry out localization and provide support for the software on site," recalls Andreas Wetzel, Head of Business Consulting, MEIKO Group Global.

Dr. Eng. Stefan Scheringer, CEO of the MEIKO Group Global, sums up the decision in favor of abas like this: "The overall picture was decisively in favor of abas ERP. Coordination of the entire sales process worked best with abas. We received answers to our questions in a timely manner, the in-house presentation impressed the entire selection team, and the involvement of international abas partners – starting in an early phase – signaled that abas has a worldwide partner network. Another key argument was the option of a high degree of customization while maintaining release compatibility, and the possibilities of a distinctive configuration technology."

FROM OFFENBURG TO THE WORLD

MEIKO first installed abas ERP at its headquarters in Offenburg, then at all sites in Germany. It was implemented in a simplified version in Australia and China in parallel with headquarters. After the implementation across Germany, the introduction continued internationally with Austria, the Netherlands, Poland, and Turkey. Malaysia is currently on the agenda, and the USA is in the planning phase. Contemporary plug-ins, such as a mobile app for outside sales (called Mobile Sales at MEIKO), were added as well. This applies for the custom programmed MEIKO contingent planning and for production. Contingent planning supports precise production planning and predicts reliable delivery times. Which machine groups are fully utilized, and where are free capacities available?

The new software applications give MEIKO competitive advantages in offer preparation, project development, meeting delivery commitments, and the fast processing of service requests. Sales staff has access to a lot of ERP data (such as customer data, prices, offers, and so on) via the mobile app, starting with the initial customer consultation, which enables fast and competent customer consulting.

Speed and planning reliability are important for MEIKO. In order for company and operations management to respond quickly to developments in the company, MEIKO uses its own business intelligence tool. The abas data is periodically transferred to the data warehouse. Data that was previously collected only in large enterprises and processed by specialized analysts is now available to company management and the specialist departments at MEIKO in their day-to-day business. This either takes the form of predefined reports, which provide information on key

indicators and important trends in the respective area, or intuitively configurable ad-hoc evaluations created directly by users without the IT department's help. Pivot tables or KPI queries can be created with just a few clicks.

WHAT GOES TOGETHER, GROWS TOGETHER

After the installation of abas ERP at headquarters in Offenburg, MEIKO began the abas rollout at the Rhein-Main dealership in 2011, which went live in April of 2012. This implementation was a pilot project. Basic work was done here for subsequent implementations. A uniform concept with an introductory guide, training documents, specifications for data transfer and the IT infrastructure, training plans, and much more was developed. This considerably sped up the subsequent rollout. The dealerships in northern Bavaria and Munich went live the same year, in December of 2012. Five more dealerships followed in 2013. Stuttgart and Mannheim in May, Hanover in November, and Leipzig and Berlin in December. "Thorough preparation paid off," Andreas Wetzel recalls.

Aside from introducing the abas ERP system, almost the entire IT infrastructure of the dealerships was converted to the new technology. Walter Armbruster, Head of IT, describes this as a "lock, stock, and barrel integration". This means that almost all dealership programs run in the MEIKO data center in Offenburg: The abas system, MS Office programs, the digital archiving system "Habel" where MEIKO stores documents, the digital service report (DSB), and the HR software "MIP" (employee information portal).

Citrix is used for dealer access to the programs in the MEIKO data center. This means the programs in the MEIKO data center can be used from just about anywhere in the world. All you need is a PC and an Internet connection. This technology is not only used by the dealerships, but also by employees who travel for MEIKO around the globe. The MPLS network technology (Multi Protocol Label Switching) is used to connect the dealerships to the MEIKO data center in Offenburg. This is quasi MEIKO's own Internet, the "MEIKO Cloud", with permanent, guaranteed transmission bandwidth and ultimate reliability. Software maintenance has been greatly simplified as well: As a rule, software is only installed once in the data center and is immediately available to all connected sites.

DUPLICATE WORK IS HISTORY

"In parallel to implementing abas ERP, MEIKO extensively optimized its processes from quotation to ordering, order processing to after-sales service" – central structures were established and duplicate work was minimized. Newly created or edited master files for customers, prices, and products now only need to be recorded once and are available to all abas users throughout the group. "Field warehouses were considerably reduced and replaced by rapid access to the central warehouse in Offenburg. Service has access to this inventory from anywhere in real time, for example, to guarantee the just-in-time delivery of replacement parts for Customer Service. In addition to more efficient business processes, employees at the sites now have access to the same information as their colleagues in Offenburg," says Andreas Wetzel.

STRONGER FEELING OF TOGETHERNESS

An unexpected aspect during the introduction of the new IT structure and ERP system was the convergence of different cultural groups such as Australians, natives of Baden, Chinese, Swabians, Saxons, and people from Hamburg. "Not just the project meetings and installation work, but also the occasional small party made a major contribution to international understanding and the important feeling of togetherness. It was genuine MEIKO teamwork: Numerous successful ERP/IT conversions with no major problems. Every dealership was able to conduct its day-to-day business on the first day of going live. Then there was the integration of the first international sites.

"In summary, we can say that various teams from different specialist departments got closer to each other in the course of these tasks and challenges," says Andreas Wetzel.

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