

SAP Customer Success Story

“mySAP PLM integrates all participants in the life-cycle process chain in a seamless information flow and bridges any integration gaps.”

Klaus Buchholz, Information Services Manager, Hansgrohe AG



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AT A GLANCE

Company Name

Hansgrohe AG, Germany
www.hansgrohe.com

Industry

Manufacturing (bathroom fixtures)

Key Challenges

Optimize the product design and development processes

Implementation Partner

SAP® Consulting, Cenit Consulting

Solution and Services

mySAP™ Product Lifecycle Management

Existing Environment

SAP R/3® (production planning and control, financials, human resources, sales and distribution)

Implementation Highlights

- 150 end users
- Implemented in just 5 months

Key Benefits

- Faster time-to-market
- Lower product development costs
- Higher quality product development

Hardware

IBM pSeries

Operating System

- AIX for database server
- Windows 2000 for content server

HANSGROHE AG

mySAP™ PRODUCT LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT ACCELERATES TIME-TO-MARKET FOR A GLOBAL MANUFACTURER.

Hansgrohe AG, one of the world's most pioneering designers of bathroom fittings, had a problem. By the time an initial design had been converted into a market-ready product, the process chain was flooded with data and documents. The company needed a system that could manage the product data and design processes and make them available where needed. After implementing mySAP™ Product Lifecycle Management (mySAP PLM) to handle this task, Hansgrohe is now benefiting from faster time-to-market, lower costs, and higher quality in product development. The mySAP PLM implementation project received expert support from SAP Consulting.

CREATING THE DREAM BATHROOM

Hansgrohe products turn bathing into a truly luxurious experience. Fittings, showers, and accessories with the Hansgrohe name bear the hallmark of creative designers from all over the world. Kitchen fittings and innovative solutions for intelligent domestic water recycling complement these products, which enjoy a global demand. In fiscal 2003, the company, which is based in Schiltach in the Black Forest region of southern Germany, posted revenues of €369 million. It has a total workforce of more than 2,400 employees.

IMPROVING INNOVATION, SPEED, AND EFFICIENCY

But Hansgrohe products can't compete based on their design alone – they also have to be attractive in terms of price and quality, which demands consistently high performance in the process chain of development and production. Such was the focus of an ambitious project that kicked off at the start of 2003 in Schiltach. "Our main objective was to streamline the entire process chain of the product life cycle," says Klaus Buchholz, information services manager.

This boiled down to leveraging state-of-the-art information technology to bring more innovative products to the market faster and at a lower cost. Currently, around half of the 10,000-plus sales items are renewed every five years on average. To create a powerful IT environment to accelerate time-to-market, the company first had to eradicate some rather antiquated practices. Managing product data was particularly problematic, which was hardly surprising because data volumes grew by around 1,000 new CAD files and other project-related files each month.

A substantial amount of this data ended up on separate PCs and lay dormant in local file systems. "Everyone was creating and working with their own pool of data," says Buchholz. This resulted in redundancies, a lack of transparency, and lengthy times for users trying to retrieve data and documents. The situation was exacerbated by the use of different methods and tools by the departments involved in development, which made the process highly fragmented. Small wonder, then, that product development slowed – a major drawback in the face of ever-fiercer competition and high innovation demands.

ALL-EMBRACING OPTIMIZATION INITIATIVE WITH mySAP PLM AND SAP CONSULTING

The time was ripe for a radical change. Under the banner "PLM@Hansgrohe," the company launched an optimization initiative that combined three ambitious goals: to improve product data management using advanced product life-cycle management (PLM) strategies, to migrate to a new CAD system, and to redesign processes to increase efficiency.

mySAP PLM, which is used for enterprise-wide management of product-specific information, forms the core of the new product development IT infrastructure. CATIA V5 is used for 3D design. mySAP PLM streamlines the flow of product data from various sources throughout the process chain. "mySAP PLM slips easily into the existing SAP® R/3® landscape and seamlessly integrates with our ERP, office, and CAD/CAM environments," says Buchholz. The new solution was chosen to improve output quality, shorten the time-to-market process, and lower costs, particularly by slimming down the overhead involved in change.

To define the target product development process, the team first needed an outline of the current environment. The sketch was so complex that it stretched across four sheets of A0-size paper.

The project team also had the job of making the product development process more structured, transparent, and efficient. To assist with the project realization, Hansgrohe secured the support of SAP Consulting. "We opted for SAP consultants because their familiarity with the products and technologies would ensure the best possible knowledge transfer," says Buchholz. They didn't disappoint. "The expert support we received on implementation and SAP R/3 integration was key to the project being realized on schedule," says Buchholz. Additional services were provided by Cenit AG, which implemented SAP's PLM solution for CATIA.

CONTROLLED DATA FLOW FROM START TO FINISH

After a five-month implementation period, Hansgrohe went live with mySAP PLM in May 2003. The solution controls the central storage, management, and provision of all product data “from the cradle to the grave” – which is how Buchholz describes the goal of uniform data management throughout the product life cycle. Although a few functional enhancements are needed to make sure that every link of the chain functions smoothly, the

“mySAP PLM helps us develop more new models in less time and so meet the high innovation demands of our markets.”

Klaus Buchholz, Information Services Manager, Hansgrohe AG

core of the new IT infrastructure for product development is in place. Based on predefined storage structures and source documents, a uniform base of data is available any time and from anywhere thanks to a sophisticated authorization concept. Home-grown add-ons, which integrate easily with the flexible mySAP PLM solution, helped meet company-specific requirements.

“With mySAP PLM, private data stockpiles are now a thing of the past – as are redundancies in the stored data, time-consuming searches, and lengthy wait times,” says Alexander Ruf, the IT team member at Hansgrohe responsible for SAP PLM application development. The data is also more transparent and up-to-date, thanks to the integrated mapping capabilities for versioning and revisioning, targeted document distribution, action triggers, and automated workflows for change requests, approval procedures, and releases.

From the initial concept, technical design and engineering and procurement, right through to production handover, all the project teams and employees involved are integrated in a seamless information flow. What’s more, the milestones in the development process ensure that projects are monitored and transparent at each stage. All employees – from design engineers to buyers – can call up task-specific information on their PCs. “Accessing the required documents directly from the same application,” is how Ruf sees this process, which like all other processes benefits from the familiar look and feel of Microsoft Office applications.

WELL EQUIPPED FOR THE FUTURE

This year promises further progress for Hansgrohe. The company is adding functions, enhancing workflows, incorporating new groups of users, and developing the classification system. Global engineering is also on the horizon, which entails linking up to other international

development offices and enabling information to be shared with external partners in joint development projects. Thanks to mySAP PLM, Hansgrohe is ideally equipped to meet these challenges.

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