

## SAP Customer Success Story Industrial Machinery and Components



**“With SAP XI, we can incorporate partner companies into the value chain more easily and implement new business models and processes more quickly .”**

Torsten Hopmeier, CIO, Weidmüller Interface GmbH & Co. KG

### AT A GLANCE

#### Summary

Weidmüller, the leading manufacturer of components for electrical connection technology, optimized its business processes with the help of the SAP NetWeaver™ platform. The result: lower costs and greater flexibility.

#### Web Site

[www.weidmueller.com](http://www.weidmueller.com)

#### Key Challenges

- Enable integration between a wide array of heterogeneous systems
- Eliminate slow, manual business processes
- Reduce high IT costs associated with complex interfaces

#### Project Objectives

- Integrate processes across SAP® and non-SAP software systems and department boundaries
- Incorporate business partners into the value chain

#### Solutions and Services

SAP NetWeaver: the SAP Exchange Infrastructure (SAP XI), SAP Business Intelligence, and SAP Enterprise Portal components

#### Why SAP® Solution

- Cost-effective technology, enabling internal and external integration of processes
- Ability to protect existing IT investments
- Long-term security
- Rich functionality

#### Implementation Highlights

- Was one of the first midsize companies to implement SAP XI
- Successfully implemented solution in just 2 months

#### Key Benefits

- Reduction in ongoing operating costs
- Shorter process lead times
- Less time and effort required for integration
- Ability to incorporate business partners more quickly
- Smoother business processes
- Access to accurate, real-time data

#### Implementation Partners

- SAP Consulting
- Lynx AG
- Atos Origin

#### Existing Environment

- SAP R/3® software, now available in the mySAP™ ERP solution
- mySAP Supplier Relationship Management solution, including the SAP Enterprise Buyer component

#### Databases

- MaxDB 7.5
- Oracle 9.2

#### Hardware

IBM pSeries 690

#### Operating System

AIX 5.2

## WEIDMÜLLER

### Higher Flexibility and Process Efficiency Thanks to Components from the SAP NetWeaver™ Platform

Weidmüller is the leading manufacturer of components for electrical connection technology, with sales of €360 million and some 2,300 people employees worldwide. As an OEM supplier, the company sets global standards in the field of electrical connection technology.

Today, Weidmüller continues to sharpen its competitive edge by placing special focus on enhancing efficiencies throughout the company. “Our goal is to optimize our processes so we can react to internal and external customer requirements as flexibly and quickly as possible,” explains Torsten Hopmeier, CIO at Weidmüller. A key part of its customer-oriented strategy is SAP® Exchange Infrastructure (SAP XI), a component of SAP NetWeaver™, the open integration and application platform that enables change.

Weidmüller customers benefit from a wide range of services and a product portfolio that ranges from terminal blocks, printed circuit board connectors and terminals, protected components, industrial Ethernet components, and relay sockets to power supply and overvoltage protection modules suitable for all applications. Electrical installation and marking material, basic input/output (I/O) components, and a variety of tools round off its portfolio of offerings. Weidmüller products are mainly used in switch cabinets and for field wiring.

## **Integration Made Easy**

Weidmüller was one of the first midsize companies to implement SAP XI, and did so within just two months. It also switched over existing interfaces and implemented new ones in the same time frame. The challenge was no small one, however, as Weidmüller works with heterogeneous applications – a mixture of SAP software, third-party applications, and in-house developments. But the efforts were well worth it.

“Tasks that used to take weeks can now be completed much more quickly, thanks to SAP XI,” says Hopmeier.

**“This newly acquired technology ensures that our interfaces operate seamlessly and that our business processes run more smoothly.”**

Michael Berkner, Project Leader, Weidmüller Interface GmbH & Co. KG

Instead of point-to-point connections, Weidmüller relies on the open, flexible architecture provided by SAP XI, reducing the time and effort required for integration, not to mention operating costs. At the same time, it also uses SAP XI to enable better visibility of business processes, a point that Michael Berkner, SAP XI project leader at Weidmüller, is quick to emphasize. “This newly acquired technology ensures that our interfaces operate seamlessly and that our business processes run more smoothly,” he says. Berkner also goes on to explain that the company is able to generate interfaces far more easily using placeholder objects in the target system. “There’s no other product that is this user-friendly,” he says.

## **Speeding Up Processes**

With SAP XI, Weidmüller now enjoys integrated processes throughout the enterprise – from product conception to production, right through the marketing phase. Strategically important product data is transferred to adjacent systems (such as product development and documentation systems) automatically and in real time, so there is no longer any need for time-consuming uploads and downloads. And correcting faulty or incomplete data is likewise a thing of the past.

Once the project is completed and all related processes have been automated, customers and employees alike will have constant access to accurate, current data on the 35,000 existing Weidmüller products, as well as new developments. “Technical data for new innovations will be transferred to the product catalog even before the product has been manufactured, thus improving the service to our customers and business partners,” says Berkner.

The technical departments benefit, too. Thanks to the high level of integration between applications, employees can continue to work in their usual system environment. “This means the company can protect existing investments while increasing process efficiency,” says Hopmeier. The CIO also mentions that the IT department is getting requests for SAP XI from more and more of the technical staff members who want to make specific processes more efficient.

SAP XI's business process engine is the force behind these efficiencies; it is the technology that makes it possible to create cross-application workflows. In fact, Weidmüller plans to use automated workflow to integrate product photos into its product catalog.

### **Implementing New Business Models Quickly**

The benefits of SAP XI reach well beyond company boundaries. "With SAP XI, we can incorporate partner companies into the value chain more easily and implement new business models and processes more quickly," says Hopmeier.

For the CIO at Weidmüller, SAP XI represents the first step of a strategic reorientation based on SAP NetWeaver. Staying true to the adage "start small, grow big," Weidmüller plans to gradually introduce the platform's SAP Business Intelligence component

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and expand its use of SAP Enterprise Portal (SAP EP), also a component in SAP NetWeaver. For example, the company wants to introduce a process to support make-or-buy decision making using SAP NetWeaver technology.

### **Making the Users' Lives Easier**

Since the first Weidmüller employees began working with SAP EP, the company has been able to reduce the amount of paperwork and streamline related processes. For example, portal technology allows managers to easily access cost center reports using the SAP Manager Self-Service application to ensure that budgets are being accurately administered. HR and controlling

staff, as well as regular employees, now use the electronic time-recording system in the SAP Employee Self-Service application, which significantly reduces their workload. And, using a simple "keyword" search tool, employees can easily find documents and information in any department throughout the entire company.

By enabling Weidmüller to more easily integrate SAP software and non-SAP software, SAP EP further simplifies work-related processes. One example includes integration of the optical archiving system and the SAP Enterprise Buyer component found in the mySAP™ Supplier Relationship Management solution, which Weidmüller uses for ordering C materials. "Employees can now call up exactly the information and functions they need from one screen – and all without having to log on separately to every system. That saves time and increases productivity," says Hopmeier, who is committed to having SAP NetWeaver remain a part of the company's future. In fact, plans are already under way to make SAP EP available to more employees.

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