

SAP Customer Success Story



For **Freudenberg**, a diversified technology company, virtual project teams and global knowledge management are part of its daily corporate culture. When the company first went live with its enterprise portal, **Freudenberg Information Xchange (FIX)**, one of the biggest challenges it faced was to integrate its heterogeneous system landscapes to enable worldwide central access to ERP systems, CRM solutions, HR modules, and analytical applications, along with e-mail, Internet, databases, and office applications. The company chose mySAP™ Enterprise Portal to help it accomplish this daunting task.



FREUDENBERG

mySAP™ ENTERPRISE PORTAL AT FREUDENBERG

MORE VALUE ADDED AND HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

Virtual project teams, global knowledge management, and efficient information structures are not merely a vision for the future at Freudenberg – they are a reality and an established part of the corporate culture. With mySAP™ Enterprise Portal as the base technology, the Freudenberg Information Xchange (FIX) enterprise portal provides central, role-based access to applications, information, and services – decisively accelerating and improving corporate communication and business processes.

ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS IN 42 COUNTRIES

Freudenberg is a diversified technology company with activities in the areas of seals and vibration control technology, nonwovens, household products, specialty lubricants, building systems, flexible PCBs, and IT services. Established in 1849 as a tannery in Weinheim, Germany, Freudenberg today employs some 30,000 people in 42 countries. In 2000, it posted sales of €4.2 billion.

INTEGRATING HETEROGENEOUS SYSTEM LANDSCAPES

Based on SAP software, the enterprise portal went live in July 2001 as an intranet solution with four roles for some 600 users. The project was led by e-Freudenberg GmbH, a subsidiary of Freudenberg IT KG. "One of our biggest challenges was to integrate the heterogeneous system landscapes to enable worldwide central access to ERP systems, CRM solutions, HR modules, and Hyperion, as well as e-mail, Internet, databases, and office applications. These considerations meant that the conceptually advanced and technically proven SAP solution mySAP Enterprise Portal was our only choice," says Ulrich Roßkopf, managing director at e-Freudenberg.

Karl Sinz, managing director, Freudenberg IT, underscores the importance of protecting the investment: "Building an enterprise portal is a dynamic process, so it's important to go with a product that won't soon become obsolete, that will still be around tomorrow and that integrates smoothly into our IT environment." Successful deployment of an enterprise portal of this scale also requires optimum conditions. "The moving force behind this project was the Freudenberg management board. This highlights the importance of the enterprise portal within the company. Both the management board and supervisors were actively involved in the plans from the beginning," adds Sinz.

MAKING EXISTING KNOWLEDGE AVAILABLE

Freudenberg chose a portal with single sign-on capability that enables personalized access through a Web browser. Employees only need to log on once, and require just one password and one user name. Sophisticated IT security mechanisms provide comprehensive security and regulate the access modalities. Employees access their business processes through iViews, dynamic, role-specific applications. Wherever up-to-date information is required in the company – whether it be in production, sales, mar-

keting, accounting, or human resources – this need is met with information ranging from reports, analyses, results, and documentation to course materials, specialized literature, presentations, and data on daily activities. The benefit: more efficient work processes thanks to structured information that can be used immediately.

This means higher productivity because it relieves employees from tedious routine tasks, creating "breathing space" for value-added activities. The company also plans to utilize the patented Drag&Relate™ technology, which enables information from differ-

ent sources to be linked together simply by clicking on an object and dragging it to another object.

"In the future, the work environment will move more and more toward networking, and we will increasingly work in projects as part of global teams. This means that existing knowledge must be made available to a broader readership, and the practical experience within our group quickly and easily exchanged so that projects can be accomplished as a team – that's what our portal must support."

*Dr. Peter Stehle, Member of the Management Board,
Freudenberg & Co.*

The enterprise portal, which runs on HP ProLiant servers, contains a number of additional productivity-enhancing features. These include competitor tracking, a corporate telephone book, knowledge management applications, company news, a travel center with online booking, and an online shop for ordering office materials. A search engine enables searches across the entire group.

FURTHERING GLOBAL COOPERATION

Communication across the enterprise has improved radically and is now at an overall high level of quality. Projects aimed at providing further benefits to customers can be completed more quickly with the enterprise portal. Especially noteworthy in this respect are international projects – and with 244 Freudenberg subsidiaries across the globe, this is a significant factor. Specialists in different countries and time zones can work simultaneously on the same documents, and everyone is always up to date – which keeps the projects moving forward. For meetings, the project team convenes in virtual project rooms, discusses solutions, presents results, decides on future activities, and arranges deadlines. This efficient way of communicating and cooperating keeps paper-based correspondence to a minimum, reduces process and travel costs, and boosts added value.

“Even more crucial is that these internal improvements benefit customers. We can ship more quickly and with a higher on-time rate, and we can significantly improve customer support. So the true beneficiaries are our customers.”

Dr. Peter Bettermann, Speaker of the Management Board, Freudenberg & Co.

The enterprise portal brings benefits to more than just long-term projects. Time-consuming daily work processes can now be coordinated more quickly in a virtual conference room, leading to faster results. Newsgroups and discussion forums provide opportunities for qualified exchange of information. Lotus

QuickPlace is integrated as a collaboration and communication tool for creating workspaces for project teams, and provides discussion forums and chat functions.

THE MANAGER'S PORTAL OF THE FUTURE

In May 2002, Freudenberg, as an SAP First Customer Shipment customer, set another milestone on its way to group-wide knowledge management when SAP Enterprise Portal 5.0 went live. It implemented the Business Package for Manager Self-Services, which contains specific scenarios for the manager role. For the team of e-Freudenberg, this has a double benefit: “Since we are not only users but also implementation partners for portal solutions, the experience gained during the implementation of mySAP Enterprise Portal serves as a multiplier,” says Roßkopf. “We can recommend a solution with which we are very satisfied without reservation to our external customers.”

The enterprise portal for managers enabled the initial 200 users to access critical information quickly and easily and view the details of many of their daily tasks – a process that was impossible in the past. Now, for example, the personalized interface pro-

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vides managers with central access to the cost center monitor, and they can call up reports on costs and budgets or personnel data. They can also actively influence and control the business processes that are now integrated in the system. "Management is a demanding clientele: it traditionally has little time, yet must often be informed down to the last detail," says Roßkopf. "With mySAP Enterprise Portal, we have successfully been able to provide bundled information for this user segment."

THE BEST PORTAL SOLUTION FOR STRENGTHENING COMPETITIVENESS

The people at Freudenberg know: reacting quickly to changing conditions and taking advantage of new market opportunities is only possible through cooperation across business areas and countries. Information as a raw material takes on critical

significance in strategic enterprise management. "Only by making knowledge available globally can we be faster in the market and for our customers," says Roßkopf. "That is the decisive factor

in strengthening our international competitiveness." He summarizes the project's success: "For us, mySAP Enterprise Portal is by far the best portal solution for realizing these goals."

Based on initial feedback, Freudenberg plans to implement more functionality for the manager role: reporting, accounting, customer relationship management, and personnel management. Another item on the priority list includes providing alarm functions in budgeting

and projects. "That means that we will enrich our portal with additional role-based functionality," says Roßkopf with a view toward future projects.

"The advent of our intranet in July 2001 was a first small step toward a corporate communication platform. Migrating to SAP Enterprise Portal 5.0 will be a quantum leap forward that will make the enterprise portal an indispensable and, above all, profitable tool of cooperation and communication in the Freudenberg Group."

Wolfgang Oriens, Corporate Communications,
Freudenberg & Co.