

Simple and versatile – SAP with xSeries and Linux for IWKA companies.



Source: IWK Verpackungstechnik GmbH

Overview

■ **The Challenge**

Setup of complete newly integrated ERP systems corresponding to the typical requirements of the IWKA corporation medium-sized machinery and equipment manufacturing companies.

■ **The Solution**

Industry: Industrial

Application: SAP® R/3

Software: Linux®, Tivoli®

Hardware: IBM @server® xSeries™

■ **The Benefits**

Cost-effective, clearly structured system environment with high stability, security and optimum scalability at the same time. The project was realized by IWKA InformationsSysteme with the support of the IBM consultancy company SerCon and the hardware partners Fritz and Macziol.

“When our company was established four years ago, a greater challenge awaited us: we had to very quickly redesign a computer center, which needed renovation, with a self-developed PPS system, and at the same time bring the out-of-date technology up to the latest standards”, says Frank Schäfer, Managing Director of IWKA InformationsSysteme GmbH. The task of setting up a competency center providing the companies of the IWKA Group with modern information and communications technology was not easy. “Our service must convince”, says Schäfer. “We can’t just support ourselves by saying it’s an order ‘from above’ when we approach the companies of the corporation”, because decentralization is a ‘sacred’ principle at the IWKA corporation. “We prefer using speedboats instead of tankers”, notes Schäfer, smiling. About 100 independent, medium-size structured companies work together in the

business sectors of equipment engineering, production technology, process technology and packaging technology, making IWKA one of the leading worldwide active system suppliers in machinery and equipment manufacturing with revenues of over 2.3 billion Euros and about 13,000 employees.

Many questions – one answer: SAP.

Just as the companies are responsible for their own operating businesses, they can also independently decide how and with whom they organize and operate their information technology. IWKA InformationsSysteme seeks to acquire both companies within the group and external customers with complete system solutions. The principle is to achieve practically useful applications with the easiest operability. With these premises, it was clear that only a comprehensive system for the entire Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) would provide the basis for successful development. Several providers were examined closely. System specifications, screening procedures, classification criteria – everything led to one clear result: SAP R/3. Frank Schäfer remarks: “With SAP R/3, we have a forward-looking solution with which we can organize all the administrative and operational business processes efficiently and profitably. Exactly this corresponds to our strategic goals.”

Especially convincing was the project management – something that is particularly important in machinery and equipment manufacturing. After closely evaluating the application requirements and after successful customization, IWKA Informations-Systeme started working on all the modules, as well as some built-in user-exit 'specialties' (for instance, a particularly important missing parts management system and a completely automatic spare parts process for special machinery manufacturing) for about 500 SAP users for the first two customers – IWK Verpackungstechnik and Hassia Verpackungsmaschinen. "Successful", as Frank Schäfer assesses today with satisfaction. Contributing to this success in the introductory phase was the energetic support of SerCon, an SAP partner that is a proven consultancy company of IBM Deutschland.

Simply better: Linux.

Stability and cost-effectiveness were the criteria in choosing the operating system. In the meantime, Frank Schäfer was convinced of the advantages that were becoming increasingly clearer with the worldwide-deployed Open Source Software. In difficult economic times, the operating system scores a hit with medium-sized companies because of its low overall costs. In comparison with other operating systems, studies prove that the total cost of ownership (TCO) for Linux is considerably lower. "There are no licensing fees with Linux and the stability and security of the system also bring cost advantages during the operation. Linux servers have substantially fewer downtimes and you don't always have to be rebooting the system. There isn't actually any argument against Linux", remarks Frank Schäfer. The openness, performance and maintenance-friendliness of the system lead to a

clear decision: SAP R/3 and SUSE Linux are a great combination.

Flexible variety: IBM @server xSeries.

The question of performance, stability, and especially scalability were also at the forefront when it came to server technology. And IBM had a convincing answer: IBM @server xSeries. With its X-Architecture™, IBM has successfully transferred the well-known standards of availability, security and flexibility from the IBM mainframe to the Intel® processor-equipped server family. Frank Schäfer: "The xSeries offers a convincing technological and cost-effective server concept that is optimally suited to our medium-sized clientele."

The current SAP configuration consists of nine 4-way IBM eServer xSeries 350s, each with 6 GB main memory – a database server, four application servers, a development and test server, plus a development and production server for the HR system. All are neatly stored in a space-saving rack-server.

The SAP data is stored on a storage system connected by a gigabyte switch. An IBM LTO Ultrium Tape Library with Tivoli Storage Manager is used for data protection. In addition, SAP users can access the system and start other Windows® applications over a Citrix meta-frame server farm comprising several IBM @server xSeries 330.

The server configuration is optimally designed for the current workload of the SAP applications. Soon, however, two more companies from the IWKA corporation will be added and the user number will increase to around 900. Therefore, the expansion of the server environment is being tackled now together with the proven hardware partner Fritz and Macziol. An 8-way IBM @server xSeries 440 (with the option of quickly upgrading to 16

processors) was chosen as database server and Frank Schäfer is already thinking of using the Ultimate XpandOnDemand scalability of x440 also for the application servers. He is certain: "The xSeries offers us a fully flexible, highly available and extremely cost-saving IT basis, even for meeting increasing demands. Especially the x440 Server has proven to be an ideal platform for our SAP applications."



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