



Aptar dispenses integrated business information with SAP solutions

The AptarGroup family of companies is a leader in the worldwide dispensing systems industry. With more than 6,000 employees in over 18 countries, AptarGroup is managed from Crystal Lake, Illinois, in the United States. The company manufactures innovative spray pumps, dispensing closures, nasal pumps, aerosol valves, and lotion pumps. These systems are created using sophisticated high-speed machines and robots, with the aid of advanced plastic injection molding technologies.

AptarGroup originally implemented SAP software in 1996, with instances in France, Germany, Italy and the U.S. As the company grew, operational expenses rose steadily, and in 2002 the AptarGroup management team reviewed the options.

Antonio D'Alessandro, Information Systems (IS) Director at AptarGroup, explains: "While we were one company from a financial standpoint, each division functioned independently, using a variety of different systems. We needed a powerful information management system, and selected SAP as the best solution for our needs."

Choosing IBM SAP hosting

The decision to implement SAP software represented more than a technical challenge: Antonio D'Alessandro points out that it also required managers to "start thinking about the global impact of their decisions in a more integrated environment."

The introduction of SAP solutions would create stronger links with external partners, too, so a major change management project was implemented. AptarGroup implemented core SAP solutions in five separate data centers: financials/controlling, project planning, distribution and customer relationship management, quality management, plant maintenance and warehouse management, an advanced planning and optimization pilot and several business intelligence projects.

While the SAP solutions were an immediate success, providing unprecedented speed and quality in reporting and analysis, the five-center architecture meant that costs were high.

Says D'Alessandro: "On closer examination, it became clear that internally we would not be able to

Overview

■ The Challenge

Provide SAP solutions to global operations divisions
Keep operational costs low and deliver high-availability systems

■ The Solution

Industry: Manufacturing
Applications: SAP solutions for manufacturing, including ERP, advanced planning & optimization, and business intelligence
Hardware: IBM @server[®] iSeries[™] Models 870 and 825
Software: IBM OS/400[®] Version 5 Release 2, IBM DB2[®]
Services: RealTech, IBM e-business hosting Center

■ The Benefits

Known, predictable costs lower than would be possible using internal resources
Higher service levels
Possibility to consolidate five SAP system instances to one for improved global reporting and management information



sustain the required service levels. One of our existing SAP systems was running on IBM **@server** pSeries, and the other four on IBM **@server** iSeries. We realized it made a lot of sense to consolidate all five to a single hardware platform, for financial and service-level reasons, so the hunt was on for the best solution.”

Consolidating to cut costs

The company chose the IBM e-business hosting Center in Chicago, consolidating to an IBM **@server** iSeries Model 870 for production, and i825 for development and test. Data is managed using IBM DB2 information management software. AptarGroup continues to run the five separate SAP system instances as before. AptarGroup selected iSeries based on its long experience of its excellent reliability and ease of use.

“We needed to provide a service like the IBM e-business hosting Center, but it was not convenient or cost-effective to build those capabilities internally at AptarGroup,” comments D’Alessandro. “We have been working with IBM e-business hosting Center since 2003, and the service is good, the bandwidth and connection reliability excellent, and it has delivered robust performance.”

Consolidating SAP Systems

The migration to the hosted environment was made with assistance from REALTECH: “The transition to the hosted solution was easy, and REALTECH handled the whole process from start to finish,” says D’Alessandro. “They did a great job working with IBM, and managed the EBCDIC to ASCII codepage conversions efficiently and without a hitch.

Building group-wide business benefits

Now that the SAP system instances are consolidated to the single iSeries server, D’Alessandro and the team is able to review operational consolidation and group-wide business reporting in a way that was not previously possible.

“SAP Business Information Warehouse has been extremely useful, giving us flexibility in analysis, and enabling end-users to generate tailored reports without intervention from the IS department.

“The data is always up-to-date and easy to access from the consolidated system, with faster reporting.”

“We are confident that the IBM hosted solution for SAP places us perfectly for such future developments.”

Antonio D’Alessandro, Information Systems (IS) Director at AptarGroup

Creating an integrated business

The AptarGroup team is now considering the benefits of implementing a single instance of the SAP system for all five divisions of the company. This will greatly improve information sharing and business reporting (currently generated by Hyperion tools), with IBM DB2 as the underlying information source.

“The company is structured as separate profit centers, and there is currently little requirement cross-divisional reporting,” says Antonio D’Alessandro. “However, as a single organization, a single instance of the SAP system would provide the ideal foundation for comprehensive group-wide business information. We are confident that the IBM hosted solution for SAP places us perfectly for such future developments.”



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