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SUCCESSstory

Josera: Aligning business and logistics processes

SAP Solution Manager takes over
IT at feed manufacturer

„Thanks to abat's structured approach, everything went smoothly.“

**Katharina Ouzounidou,
SAP team lead, Josera**

At a glance

Erbacher the
food family

Food and feed
manufacturer

Kleinheubach,
Lower Franconia

The company

What began in 1941 with the Josera company in a small factory for the production of feed lime in Lower Franconia is now one of the largest manufacturers of feed for livestock and pets in Germany - Erbacher the food family.

Since then, the idea of producing high quality food for humans and animals has continued to develop. New products were added and the Josera company became Erbacher the food family. Today a company with over 750 employees and locations in Germany, Poland, Ukraine, and Tanzania. The company's brands include Josera, ActivePro, and FarmChamps in the livestock sector, Josera, Josi, Bavaro, and Green Petfood in the pet food sector and Erbacher Food Intelligence in the food production sector, and as different as the names may sound, all products contribute to good and healthy nutrition for people and animals.

The challenge

The demand for quality, combined with an increasing product range of super-premium foods for animals as well as high-quality foods for humans, had led to operational challenges in recent years. In addition to strong growth, the interaction between the ERP system and logistics also put Erbacher the food family to the test. Challenges arose when business processes were changed, as transports could no longer be processed in an efficient sequence.

The solution

For this reason, a special project was on the agenda for this medium-sized company in 2017: the company-wide implementation and commissioning of SAP Solution Manager as a central control instrument for all SAP processes and thus the opportunity to create space for new ideas and innovations. With SAP Solution Manager, Erbacher the food family can „rethink" its business and logistics processes and at the same time manage its SAP environment transparently: In addition to incident management and complete documentation for compliance, the SAP solution package is now used for change, release, and test management. After the Corona outbreak, the family-owned company was in luck, because the business and logistics processes managed with SAP Solution Manager easily kept up with the sudden increase in demand for dog and cat food.

The project

After abat had earned its first spurs by migrating an outdated ERP system to SAP, another important project was on the agenda in 2017 - the introduction and cross-company operation of SAP Solution Manager. Katharina Ouzounidou, SAP team lead at Erbacher, recalls the planning phase: „We issued an invitation to tender and, after evaluating several potential partners, finally started the implementation with abat. abat had the best overall package of all the applicants and scored points with comprehensive know-how and available manpower."

According to the SAP expert, this know-how had to cover the complex logistics processes in particular - for example, for the connection of different logistics systems via interfaces to the ERP system from Walldorf, which forms the technological basis for around 90 percent of all business processes at Erbacher the food family. „We needed a partner who could help us think outside the box and understand how logistics and business processes interact." Another challenge was the huge product range, with hundreds of different materials for pet supplies, such as grain-free dog food, hypoallergenic cat food or grain-free structural feed for horses. There had been problems in the past with shipments not being processed in the correct order. „This always happened when there were major changes in the SAP release, and eventually led to an eternally long process of troubleshooting and corrections", says Erbacher the food family Application Manager Ouzounidou. Isabella Bojdol, Senior Consultant at abat: „At the time, there was a lack of cross-system information exchange, which particularly affected test management." It even happened that a business process went live in the production system without having been tested beforehand. „Then that production system had to be stitched together with a hot needle."

At the heart of the entire project was SAP Solution Manager. This is SAP's collection of tools and services that simplify and make transparent the setup, maintenance, and operation of the entire SAP landscape. „The big advantage of SAP Solution Manager is the ability to focus on business processes. It broadens the IT perspective", says Katharina Ouzounidou. This applies to incident management, for example, because the tight integration of Solution Manager into the SAP environment means that media disruptions can be avoided when processing tickets. The business user can create a ticket directly from SAP, which can then be processed by second-level support using the relevant ticket data from the original system. „Errors are identified and corrected much more quickly."

The results

- With the introduction of SAP Solution Manager, the interaction of business and logistics processes based on SAP now functions seamlessly and efficiently.

- SAP Solution Manager is used for incident, change, release, and test management.

Another challenge for the abat consultants and the team at Erbacher the food family was the upcoming upgrade to Solution Manager version 7.2 in 2018. With the upgrade, it was no longer just a matter of managing IT service management, „but also of managing releases." Katharina Ouzounidou: „Today, in addition to the ticket system, a test system, a documentation system, and change management also run via SAP Solution Manager." The solution also handles the automated tracking of releases for system changes, including the integration of key users. „The introduction of different document types was also necessary in order to be able to import changes into the systems in a flexible manner and thus avoid overruns", says Basis employee Dirk Bäcker. Among other things, this makes it possible to run fully automated regression tests to test interfaces and components in advance and then use this data to plan future changes in the production system and for revision purposes. „This was a path we had to take for

compliance reasons alone, in order to be able to provide evidence when an auditor asks questions during an audit. Thanks to abat's structured approach, everything went smoothly," sums up Ouzounidou of Erbacher the food family, and recalls what she personally remembers most - the human component. „Our colleagues quickly warmed up to the abat consultants."
So warmly, in fact, that an abat consultant and an Erbacher the food family employee even got married after the project was completed.

Conclusion

With Solution Manager, Erbacher the food family has implemented a tool that monitors all SAP business processes and logistics operations. The modular structure of Solution Manager allows IT managers to flexibly adapt processes to individual needs. Since

the introduction of Version 7.2, the company has been using the SAP tool not only for incident management, but also for change, release and test management. Dependencies of logistical processes can be mapped directly in the SAP system without media discontinuity, and test runs ensure that no errors creep into the production system. The benefits of the fast and seamless exchange of information between individual systems were particularly evident in the early days of the pandemic, when demand for dog and cat food soared.
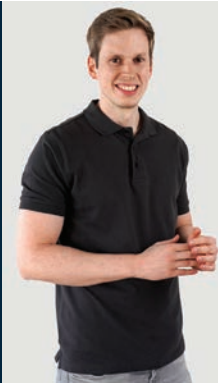
ABOUT US

abat

The abat Group, founded in 1998, is an SAP service provider, innovative software developer and provider of complete solutions for software-supported process optimization – primarily in the core industries of automotive and discrete manufacturing as well as in logistics processes and production control. With our six service areas, we give companies the freedom they need for new ideas, efficient processes, and future-oriented solutions.

In the **consulting** service area, we advise and support you in all phases of an SAP project – from conception to implementation to operation of your SAP system. With abat **manufacture**, you receive digital, high-availability solutions for production control in the complex manufacturing industry. With abat **transform** we offer you innovative and unique solutions that make you special: from AI to cloud to X-Reality. The **PLM** area offers comprehensive process consulting with the goal of achieving a continuous data flow across PLM, ERP and MES. Offerings from the **protect** area help customers secure information and maintain the confidentiality, availability, and integrity of business relationships. Finally, our **sustain** experts advise on how sustainability and CSR reporting can be strategically and structurally anchored in the company.

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