IBM Information Management software

IBM

Bayerwald sees higher productivity and lower costs with IBM Information On Demand.

Overview

- **Challenge**

  Improve efficiency of marketing and manufacturing processes, reduce the number of errors and raise the level of productivity

- **Why Become an On Demand Business?**

  Take advantage of skill set already developed in IBM Informix® Dynamic Server and avoid cost and disruption of migration to another database

- **Solution**

  Base existing applications, including CRM and ERP solutions, on high-performance Informix Dynamic Server, Version 10, to supply Information on Demand to field force and manufacturing and marketing applications

» **On Demand Business defined**
  An enterprise whose business processes—integrated end-to-end across the company and with key partners, suppliers and customers—can respond with speed to any customer demand, market opportunity or external threat.

For Bayerwald, boosting its productivity was a matter of upgrading its information management system to IBM Informix Dynamic Server, Version 10.

- **Key Benefits**

  5-fold improvement in performance of database; 20 percent reduction in cost of maintenance; improved productivity in marketing and manu-facturing operations; ability of sales force to focus more time on selling rather than communicating with the factory; lowered administrative costs due to elimination of need to rekey manufacturing and marketing data

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ON DEMAND BUSINESS

Window and door manufacturer Bayerwald Fenster und Haustüren (Bayerwald), one of the largest window crafters in Germany, prides itself on quality and its ability to provide customized products that last a lifetime.

Bayerwald makes approximately 100,000 windows and 6,000 doors annually and sells them to authorized retailers and manufacturers of prefabricated homes. Based in Neukirchen, the 300-employee Bayerwald is part of the Haas Group, which has 3,000 employees and 30 sites across Europe specializing in wood manufactured goods of all types.

To attract customers seeking the newest look, Bayerwald needs to perform flexibly by implementing innovations quickly, turning them into marketable products. The company also needs to be able to speedily meet customer-specific solutions, such as pre-installed window elements with window, blind and sealing systems for manufacturers of prefabricated homes.

However, Bayerwald needed to improve its technological infrastructure to achieve its goals and increase efficiencies in manufacturing and sales. Customer lists, for instance, previously had to be created and distributed by hand. In manufacturing, administrative personnel had to rekey orders into terminals. An average production order for insulated glass involved manually keying 500 data sets for window panes. The error-prone process resulted in orders that had to be redone.

A window of opportunity to upgrade systems

"We greatly needed to increase our efficiency," says Manfred Hamberger, IT director for Bayerwald Fenster und Haustüren. "Our enterprise resource planning system consisted largely of disconnected off-the-shelf and proprietary applications with their own standards. The customer relationship management system was only a few Excel spreadsheets. It was always time-consuming to get a picture of our clients, and our productivity potential was largely unused. The sales force had to communicate extensively with factory personnel to place orders and find out their status, which took up valuable time in both the field and the factory."

Bayerwald's IT environment consisted of independent islands of information, so when the company introduced a new product or change in a product, the basic data had to be updated at several points. This was another time-consuming, error-prone process.

The company wanted to integrate more programs, reduce its backlog and tie its operations to its database to reduce the manual data entry in sales and manufacturing. To satisfy these needs, Bayerwald decided to implement a new, more powerful information management platform with higher performance and

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lower maintenance costs. At the same time, Bayerwald wanted to preserve its investments in its existing software, and leverage the skills it had developed for managing IBM Informix Dynamic Server (IBM IDS).

"It became clear early on that Informix Dynamic Server would be the right solution for our information systems," says Hamberger. "Compared to the ease of upgrading to IBM IDS, switching to a different system would have created enormous costs and disruptions in porting the client software and training the database administrators."

To create a low-cost, easy-to-maintain solution, Bayerwald decided to upgrade its earlier version of IBM Informix Dynamic Server to Version 10. "Upgrading Informix Dynamic Server was the right decision for Bayerwald," says Hamberger. "The change cost us nothing. In addition, Informix Dynamic Server has a number of simple but high-performing database tools. Its performance is very good, its stability is well-known and the product has excellent support."

The results have been dramatic and gratifying throughout the company. "When we upgraded to IBM IDS, Version 10, we changed the hardware at the same time and were able to increase the performance by a factor of 5, and to reduce our maintenance costs by 20 percent," says Hamberger.

Faster performance and lower costs

Bayerwald's client/server architecture and its applications are now powered by its IBM IDS, Version 10, database running under Linux. All data pertaining to customers, orders, financial accounting and manufacturing is consolidated on the IBM IDS, where it is accessible to both off-the-shelf applications and proprietary programs that Bayerwald has developed in-house. Says Hamberger, "Our proprietary software is all based on IBM IDS, Version 10, our strategic database. With this Information On Demand solution, our employees and our applications are automatically provided with the information they need, when they need it. This has greatly enhanced our agility and efficiency.

"With the new version of IBM IDS we are able to automate more steps in manufacturing and sales. For instance, with the automatic generation of data sets in glass manufacturing, we don't have to rekey orders anymore. This saves time and increases productivity. The order processing structure is now more clearly structured, and that has helped us speed up our order management.
The main benefits are increased productivity and a reduction in the number of errors. And that lowers costs.

"Archiving the database to the file system has made database administration much more efficient for us," Hamberger adds. "Also, in application development we like the long identifiers and the sequences that are now available in IBM IDS, Version 10."

"Collecting all data in one highly available Informix Dynamic Server platform is a major competitive advantage for us. We can bring all our information together so it is easier to manage and more accessible for applications such as computer-aided design."

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With the latest version of Informix Dynamic Server, Bayerwald integrated all sales-relevant data previously siloed in individual Excel spreadsheets and an assortment of isolated applications. The company equipped its sales force in the field with Palm handheld devices and now feeds current sales data from the Informix database into those devices in a timely fashion. The sales force always has access to the most authoritative customer information wherever they are and are no longer required to call in. This saves a large number of phone calls between the sales force in the field and the employees at the manufacturing site, allowing Bayerwald to dedicate more time to its customers.

Using data as a competitive advantage

Thanks to Informix Dynamic Server, Bayerwald is now able to respond much more quickly to demands for new products and business processes. "Since all order and customer data is collected into one central database, the data can be linked to new applications," says Hamberger. "Collecting all data in one highly available Informix Dynamic Server platform is a major competitive advantage for us. We can bring all our information together so it is easier to manage and more accessible for applications such as computer-aided design."

Bayerwald stores more than 10 years of order data in a data warehouse also based on IBM IDS, Version 10. The statistical applications that access the data warehouse help the company make decisions for the future. "By looking at the recent orders received

and the trends retrieved from the data warehouse, we can now react faster and with more accuracy in the procurement of materials and the capacity planning of our production lines," says Hamberger. "This helps us meet the delivery dates that we promised to the customer.

"IBM assembles a solution-oriented, budget-oriented product and responds to the client's needs in a creative manner, making it the ideal partner for a small to medium-size business," says Hamberger. "The smooth operation of our central database is essential for our company. The responsiveness of IBM's support help is of the essence. The IBM Informix team gives us professional support that helps in every way we can imagine."

"Our business is growing," Hamberger concludes. "The amount of information continues to increase. On the basis of the current Informix version, we feel that we can manage this information well into the future."

For more information

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