

SUCCESS STORY

Open standard for company-specific processes

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For 18 years, a Swabian manufacturer of special machinery was able to successfully use its ERP system with only one release change. However, it was not only the situation in the current pandemic that made the need for further digitization clear.

GEDORE is an international manufacturer of premium tools, active in 70 countries. With more than 16,000 products, the family-owned company offers one of the broadest ranges of any European tool manufacturer. GEDORE Torque Solutions GmbH in Vaihingen an der Enz brings together the company's expertise in the field of screwdriving technology. There, 50 highly specialized specialists develop and manufacture torque-precise high-torque screwdrivers for the range from 60 to 54,000 Nm. The nutrunners are used primarily in mechanical and plant engineering, heavy industry, water management and in the construction of power plants and wind turbines.

Furthermore, in addition to so-called slide gate machines for the smooth opening and closing of slide gates, the company also manufactures test stands for high-torque screwdriving technology in Vaihingen. „SEW-Eurodrive, a manufacturer of drive technology that also assembles large industrial gear units, bolts with our hydraulic equipment as well as with our high seller, the battery machines. Classic steel construction is also one of our customers, such as the roof structure of the stadium in Hoffenheim,“ says Nicole Gsenger, responsible for sales and organization, citing examples of applications. „With us, the inquiries usually come very individually and specifically, often with an increased need for discussion or consultation. And we don't manufacture mass products,“ adds site manager Marco Bruhns.

Coming up with ideas

In 2003, they introduced their first ERP system. „At that time, we introduced the ERP standard caniasERP from IAS after the usual selection process,“ says Marco Bruhns. Since that time, the ERP system caniasERP from the Karlsruhe-based IAS Industrial Application Software GmbH has been in use. „We have really been working with it for a very long time and successfully, and in all these years we have now only undergone the second release upgrade to the latest version of canias4.0. Our individual customizations simply didn't require that before,“ Nicole Gsenger reveals.

In lean workshops, however, they thought about a whole series of new process optimizations. „In the process, we quickly realized that much of what we do manually belongs digitized,“ Nicole Gsenger describes. When IAS was asked about special adjustments, it became clear that with the latest release, every second adjustment would not even be necessary. „The decision was made quickly,“ says Nicole Gsenger, „before you have to program a lot of special adjustments and are still on the old system status afterwards, you should get the new release, especially since the introduction of home office workplaces due to the pandemic also forced us to become more digital.“

Individual standard

Since the introduction of caniasERP, it has been used to control inventory management, i.e. incoming and outgoing goods and purchase orders, as well as sales with quotations, order confirmations, delivery bills and invoices. After the first release

upgrade, production was also integrated. Bills of materials, routings and production orders previously all ran outside the ERP system. No individualization was needed in production, because: „Bills of materials and routings, that won't change in 3,000 years. The structure, the basic idea behind it, remains," Annabell Vorwerk, responsible for work preparation and the warehouse, is convinced.

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Another individual customization consisted of a consumption database developed by Nicole Gsenger: One enters an article and receives a consumption history of the article over the last few years, for example, regarding orders or deliveries. The ERP standard had not offered this in this form, that just by entering the article number all available information was listed. However, this information is important because, among other things, each article is checked for consumption and demand before it is produced again. Before the customization, this information had to be extracted from the ERP system and laboriously determined in Excel tables with formulas. „Thanks to the quick, trouble-free adaptation, we can determine the required batch sizes on a daily basis in addition to the entire item history. And all with a single transaction," explains Annabell Vorwerk.

Always up to date

„We installed the new system completely fresh on our servers, without any prior customizations. Now we look through the fresh, empty system with our data in it to see where we need any special customization at all, like we had in the old system," explains Nicole Gsenger, and continues, „There are many things now that we didn't even think of before, but that we can and will use now. But there are also some special transactions that we had before and still need in the new release because they are just too special.“

The newly adapted processes are mainly related to the service flow, i.e. repairs, goods receipt of re-

pairs, estimate generation and repair report. In addition, hours of operation and time tickets will also be recorded directly at the machines; right now, that happens on paper for every single day and every single employee. But the new release gives the option of putting a tablet at each machine where employees can stamp when they start their job. „The feedback comes after each production step, so we also have a better overview in work preparation and are always up to date," says Annabell Vorwerk happily.

That's super

And finally, it's also about digitizing and automating many things that were previously done manually or on foot from office to office. This includes, for example, approvals of quotations by superiors or the filing of documents, i.e. everything that belongs to a quotation such as technical drawings or a comment by the representative. „This is particularly important because in the course of the pandemic we realized that our sales department is actually unable to work from the home office, as almost all documents are in folders in the office. You then always need someone to play the gofer at the plant," Gsenger knows. Reporting has also been optimized: „We used to query everything via SQL scripts that I had created over the years, or we had to compile evaluations individually. canias4.0 can already do this to a large extent in the transactions; a lot of emphasis was placed on statistics and diagrams, so that the employees are also able to create their own evaluations. That's great.“

At GEDORE Torque Solutions, there is definitely agreement that caniasERP, with its open source code as an exceptionally flexible system, is first-class for mapping individual, company-specific processes and continuously adapting itself to new circumstances. „IAS and our ERP system help us to innovatively and reliably implement our high quality standards as a premium manufacturer for our customers today and in the future," Nicole Gsenger summarizes.

We are ready for the future

And of course, GEDORE Torque Solutions knows that the IAS software is prepared for the requirements of Industry 4.0, IoT scenarios and digital transformation. „We are already looking at the future of our company, including extensions to the business model such as predictive maintenance and pay-by-use models, which we then want to support ourselves. It's good to know that we have an IT partner who can support us competently in this direction with its software and its experts," says Bruhns confidently and confesses: „We are

also driven by digitization. Today, everyone has a cell phone with a large display in their pocket. Customers also want to see something like that on their screwdriving machine." The design department has responded to these wishes and, together with the relevant partners, has developed a machine with a large display in order to be able to capture live data, i.e. what is happening during the screwdriving process. „This means we are already well equipped for IoT scenarios and possible new business models on the machine side," says Bruhns confidently.

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