

OPTIMIZING A BUSINESS-CRITICAL SYSTEM LEADS TO PERSUASIVE COST AND PERFORMANCE ADVANTAGES

Challenge

Koenig & Bauer AG, the world's oldest printing press manufacturer, implemented a production planning and control system for its manufacturing facilities in Germany and Austria. While contemplating outsourcing, the company sought a new platform that could be operated more cost-effectively than the current BS2000 mainframe technology while meeting the highest availability and data-security requirements.

Solution

The production and control system, called Prodis, is based on Software AG's Adabas data management system and Natural programming language and is integrated into the overall IT system via webMethods EntireX. Working with Software AG, Koenig & Bauer migrated Prodis to a Sun Solaris Veritas cluster. In parallel, character-based Prodis interfaces were modernized so that the system provides a modern interface to users through a Web-based thin client solution.

Benefits

- Production and control system with modernized user interface, providing a Web-based solution
- High degree of system stability and availability, with more than 1,000 parallel users
- Reduced overhead costs by 30 to 60%
- Achieved performance increases of 30 to 80%
- Migration of 15,000 Natural objects in a very short time, without changing the business logic



With about 8,000 employees, revenues of more than 1.5 billion € in 2008, and the industry's widest range of products, the Koenig & Bauer (KBA) group is the world's third-largest printing press manufacturer and a key supplier to the global media industry. Globally, numerous high-volume newspapers and all types of printed materials are produced on KBA presses, including approximately 90% of all the banknotes in circulation around the world. The parent company is Koenig & Bauer AG (KBA) with facilities in Würzburg, Radebeul, Frankenthal, Trennfeld, Bielefeld (all in Germany) and one in Mödling (Austria).

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“The Prodis migration and modernization project has been worthwhile in every regard. Our high availability and data security requirements have been completely fulfilled. At the same time, we have saved a great deal of money and seen a significant increase in performance.”

Richard Kestler | Head of Process-Oriented Application Systems | Koenig & Bauer AG

Guaranteeing System Availability and Security

Koenig & Bauer has long relied on the Adabas- and Naturalbased Prodis solution for production planning. With webMethods EntireX the solution is now seamlessly integrated into the overall IT infrastructure, creating a close link between the SAP R/3 FI and SD modules to allow the exchange of customer information. Furthermore, KBA used various languages to develop numerous Prodis satellite applications, which also communicate directly with Prodis via webMethods EntireX. For example, design changes can be passed directly from the CAD systems to Prodis, so that parts lists can be recalculated.

While there was no question of the importance of Prodis to printing press manufacturing, KBA executives wondered if they should continue to have the responsibility of ensuring 24x7 operations with the highest performance and data-security requirements. Richard Kestler, KBA's Head of Process-Oriented Application Systems, explains that this would have required considerable additional investments. Outsourcing was considered and a service provider that could guarantee a high degree of availability with the highest level of security was found by late December 2003.

Kestler confesses, “If we had tried to continue to operate the Prodis application for the individual factories by outsourcing it to BS2000 machines, it would have been very expensive.” One alternative was to migrate Prodis from BS2000 to a less expensive platform—specifically to two Sun Solaris Unix systems in a Veritas cluster. “Although Software AG could reference a number of successful migration projects of this kind, in light of our relatively high number of

users, we were not sure whether we could transfer the previous positive experiences one to one to ourselves so easily,” Kestler explains.

In Würzburg and Frankenthal, 800 employees are working with Prodis in parallel, while there are at least 600 users in Radebeul, and only 100 in Mödling. Because of this, KBA began the Prodis migration process at the factory in Mödling.

Lowering Overhead Costs

A varied team, including several Software AG employees, carried out all the work needed for the migration at a cost of approximately three person years. Among the tasks were setting up a local development computer, installing the Software AG products, transferring data and programs, customizing interfaces to third-party output management and job-scheduling systems, and transferring the development to the outsourcing data processing center in Germany.

The migration project was successfully concluded in Mödling and also in Würzburg, Frankenthal, and Radebeul. In parallel to the migration project, modern browser interfaces were generated so that Prodis now presents a user-friendly, Web-based thin-client solution to its users.

Overall, the availability and data security goals were achieved, along with significant reductions of 30 to 60% in system overhead costs, depending on the factory. At the same time, Prodis' performance increased tremendously. For instance, with large batch runs, run time for materials disposition was shortened by 30 to 80%. Kestler sums it up: “Because we did not limit ourselves to a pure outsourcing project, we were able to achieve significant improvements in the operation of Prodis.”

KEY COMPONENTS

The production planning and control system, Prodis, is built on the Adabas database management system and Natural programming language.

webMethods EntireX was used to provide online integration between Prodis and a client-server application in the company's logistics center.

Software AG's Global Consulting Services were employed to move Prodis from the BS2000 mainframe to two Sun Solaris Unix systems in a Veritas cluster.

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Software AG's 4,000 global customers use our software to improve business processes and drive an agile IT infrastructure. Our customers' goals are to reduce costs and increase flexibility and efficiency. We help them do this by optimizing and governing their operations and aligning IT with the business goals.

Our leading Business Infrastructure Software portfolio is used for data and system integration and modernization. It fosters new levels of IT agility through SOA and allows the rapid creation of new business processes with BPM.

Our forty-year history of success ensures our customers have a reliable platform for driving future business results – faster.

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