



Innovative Biotech Company Gets Connected with Microsoft Axapta

Overview

Country or Region: Germany

Industry: Biotechnology

Customer Profile

Biolitec AG is a growing biotechnology company based in Jena, Germany. In 2002, the company employed 196 workers worldwide and generated revenue of 18.3 million Euros.

Business Situation

In 2000, the company decided to replace multiple legacy systems with one flexible, international, ERP solution. The solution had to be powerful enough to handle the company's financial data as well as manage inter-site communication and the exchange of research information.

Solution

Biolitec AG deployed Microsoft® Business Solutions—Axapta® to solve its ERP challenge. Subsidiaries access the central server using Microsoft Windows® Terminal Services, requiring no data transfer between sites.

Benefits

- Easy implementation
- Flexibility
- International/multi-lingual capabilities
- Automated internal goods traffic
- Centralized document handling Microsoft SharePoint™ Portal Server

“Without the relevant data, the company does not have a basis upon which to make decisions.”

Friedhelm Pritz, Managing Director of InoConsult

German biotechnology company Biolitec AG has prepared for future growth by reorganizing their business processes and introducing an enterprise resource planning (ERP) system based on Microsoft Business Solutions—Axapta. Together with Microsoft Windows Terminal Services and Microsoft SharePoint Portal, Microsoft Axapta connects several international subsidiary offices with the corporate headquarters. It also coordinates the movement of research and development information as well as financial data between the company's business units.

Situation

Before Biolitec AG was founded in 1988, its predecessor, CeramOptec GmbH, developed and sold lasers and optical fibers until it was acquired by a new business group in July 2000. The group went public only four months later.

One of the company's most successful new pharmaceuticals is the photo-sensitizer Foscan, which has proven remarkably successful in treating several types of cancer. Today, Biolitec AG is headquartered in Jena, Germany, and maintains subsidiaries and research institutions in Germany, the USA, Malaysia, Latvia, France, and Scotland.

Prior to the initial public offering, Biolitec AG was composed of individual companies that acted independently. According to Dr. Wolfgang Neuberger, CEO of Biolitec AG, mismatched legacy business information systems were a major problem. Neuberger reported that each site—no matter whether they were in the USA, Latvia, Malaysia, or France—used independent local systems. Business data reached the headquarters only during monthly reporting. By the time the data were collected and analyzed, it was often too late to influence operational processes in the different subsidiaries. Since there was no uniform chart of accounts, group data consolidation was laborious and time-consuming. Microsoft® Business Solutions–Axapta® was about to change all that.

At the beginning of 2002, Biolitec AG commissioned InoConsult to set up a unique IT infrastructure for the entire corporate group. Friedhelm Pritz, Managing Director of InoConsult, recalls the complexity of the task. The organizational questions dealt mostly with processes that were tightly bound to customer service and to providing relevant information for the Board of Directors. Without the relevant data, the company does

not have a basis upon which to make decisions.

Biolitec AG had been looking for a solution that was not only multilingual, but also flexible enough to function throughout the international structure of the company. After a short market evaluation in the summer of 2002, only a handful of potential providers were left: SAP, Sage KHK, and Navision (now Microsoft Business Solutions).

Biolitec AG reports that all other providers failed on the necessary international presence. mySAP was ruled out due to what Biolitec viewed as high implementation costs. Biolitec principals believed Sage KHK was missing an internationally uniform product. Finally, Microsoft Business Solutions–Axapta won the race. The reason was the functionality provided out of the box, the object-oriented structure and the flexible program structure. Biolitec expected from Microsoft Axapta a quick and comfortable realization of their demands.

Solution

Biolitec's expectations were not disappointed; in October 2002, RacTech, a Microsoft Certified Business Solutions reselling partner, implemented the solution in only four weeks.

Biolitec AG decided in favor of a centralized approach to the company's IT infrastructure. Instead of installing Microsoft Axapta worldwide in all subsidiaries, the software runs exclusively on a server in the headquarters office in Jena, Germany.

The subsidiary offices access company data over the Internet with terminal emulation by Microsoft Windows® Terminal Services. The company was also able to set up different procedures—such as an internal authorization procedure for vendor orders—simply by adding an input field to the order processing screen. The responsible manager checks the

demand and then approves the order by making an entry in the authorization field. Afterwards, the order is processed in Microsoft Axapta as usual.

It was important to introduce a common corporate chart of accounts in the company's financial management system. In the past, complex conversions were necessary, but today the financial status of the company is available at the press of a button. Microsoft Axapta takes accounting regulations of the different countries into consideration through clearing accounts.

The biggest consolidation challenge was sales document tracking. In the past, company invoices had to be transmitted by fax and entered twice, leading to human error and data corruption. Biolitec AG now stores purchase orders in the Microsoft Axapta database and stores the corresponding invoices and delivery notes in a Microsoft SharePoint™ Portal Server folder. From there, employees can use Microsoft Enterprise Portal to access the information wherever and whenever they need. The result is a highly efficient automated approval and control process.

The system also offers expertise portals for partner companies and for special clients. On the one hand, exchanging information with doctors and clinical personnel gives Biolitec important impulses for research and product development. On the other hand, they can also inform their customers more quickly than they could through more traditional channels.

InoConsult, the implementation partner, is now linking the Microsoft Axapta Project Management with employees' timekeeping inputs over the Web, using Microsoft Enterprise Portal. The result will be more efficient timekeeping data for remote employees and a faster turnaround on

invoicing. In the future, Biolitec will open Enterprise Portal to some of their preferred customers, to allow direct ordering over the Web.

Benefits

Easy Implementation

Microsoft Axapta is designed with a large amount of functionality out of the box, leading to less configuration work and faster implementation.

Flexibility

The flexible, object-oriented structure of Microsoft Axapta allows companies to easily change their procedures and adapt their solution in order to pursue new market opportunities faster than the competition.

Common Chart of Accounts

A single chart of accounts simplifies corporate financial management, especially when the finances of many geographically-separated subsidiary offices must be integrated into the financial management system. Microsoft Axapta consolidates financial data and can provide a financial overview at the press of a button.

International and Multilingual Capabilities

Microsoft Axapta takes the currencies and accounting regulations of different countries into consideration in the business logic, and can present user interfaces and print documents in the users' or customers' language and currency of choice.

Automatic Handling of Internal Goods Traffic

Microsoft Axapta can take incoming purchase orders and send them to the correct subsidiary site while automatically transforming them into sales orders and invoices. Automated tracking of orders, products, components and services throughout the supply chain reduces manual data entry, which cuts down on human error and speeds the pace of business.

For More Information

For more information about Microsoft products and services, call the Microsoft Sales Information Center at (800) 426-9400. In Canada, call the Microsoft Canada Information Centre at (877) 568-2495. Customers who are deaf or hard-of-hearing can reach Microsoft text telephone (TTY/TDD) services at (800) 892-5234 in the United States or (905) 568-9641 in Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact your local Microsoft subsidiary. To access information using the World Wide Web, go to: www.microsoft.com

For more information about RacTech products and services, visit the Web site at: www.ractech.de

For more information about Biolitec AG products and services, visit the Web site at: www.biolitec.com

Centralized Document Handling with Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server

SharePoint Portal Server makes group documentation available in a single source and allows business units and research teams to exchange ideas and form functioning communities. Document check-out/check-in procedures reduce version control problems, and access authorization secures documents within groups and allows targeted processing.

Microsoft Business Solutions offer integrated business applications and services that allow small and midsize organizations and divisions of large enterprises to connect employees, customers, and suppliers for improved efficiency. The financial management, customer relationship management, supply chain management, and analytics applications work with other Microsoft software, including the Microsoft Office System and the Windows operating system, to streamline processes across an entire organization. This gives businesses insight to respond rapidly, plan strategically, and execute quickly. Microsoft Business Solutions are delivered through a worldwide network of channel partners that provide specialized services and local support tailored to a company's needs.

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Software and Services

■ Products

- Microsoft SharePoint Portal Server 2001
- Microsoft SQL Server 2000

■ Solutions

- Microsoft Business Solutions–Axapta
- Technologies
- Microsoft Terminal Services

Microsoft Business Solutions

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