



A ONE-STOP CAD SHOP – FRIMO OPTIMIZES CAD MODEL MANAGEMENT

FRIMO Freilassing, the tool and machinery maker of the FRIMO Group, recently decided to migrate to CATIA V5. It took advantage of this opportunity to simultaneously shift its PDM system to SAP PLM. We spoke with Lorenz Dießbacher, Head of IT at FRIMO Freilassing, about the systems change, the advantages gained by implementing the SAP solutions, and his experiences in working with CENIT as an IT service provider.

► WHAT ROLE DO CENIT SOLUTIONS PLAY IN YOUR ENTERPRISE?

In the field of product development here at FRIMO in Freilassing, CENIT solutions meanwhile play a big role. First of all, CENIT helped us integrate CATIA into SAP. This was done with an add-on to the standard interface which lets our designers work in SAP directly from CATIA. This helped us gain user acceptance, and it saves the developers from having to switch back and forth between CATIA, other EDM/PDM systems, and SAP. Another advantage is reduced administrative effort. As an IT manager, you naturally try to keep the number of systems and interfaces to a minimum, and the direct integration of CAD and SAP was very welcome in this respect.

In summary, we feel that CENIT advised us well throughout the entire course of the project, and that the CENIT-implemented solutions offer us good support, both in terms of development / design and in terms of benefits to processes further down the logistics chain.

► WHAT BASIC CONSIDERATIONS LED YOU TO INTRODUCE SAP SOLUTIONS BY CENIT?

Even before we acquired our 25 CATIA licenses, we already knew that we wanted to continue managing our documents

“In the field of product development here at FRIMO in Freilassing, CENIT solutions meanwhile play a big role”

Lorenz Dießbacher
IT manager of FRIMO Freilassing

► YOU MENTION SYSTEMS ACCEPTANCE - WERE THERE INTERNAL RESERVATIONS AT THE BEGINNING?

Well, the name SAP has connotations like “big”, “complex” and “expensive”, and that’s why our end users were indeed a bit critical at first, especially given the large number of changes we were implementing. But we made sure that precisely these end users participated very closely in design and implementation. This allowed them to understand the direct advantages they would gain in their day-to-day work. And it was the only way we could succeed in running our very first CATIA customer project entirely via SAP.

using a PLM system. Up to that point, our clear choice was OpenEDM. But in view of the ongoing integration, we agreed to conduct a benchmark test that also looked at SAP and SmarTeam Express. And SAP won out - among other factors, because of its deep ERP integration. In addition, CENIT offered us a whole range of helpful add-on solutions such as the Drawing Manager, products for communication of geometries, etc.

We started with the pilot at Freilassing. And because the benefits have turned out to be just as sustainable as CENIT promised, several other departments have now announced that they’re also interested in CENIT solutions.



FRIMO: A ONE-STOP CAD SHOP

► SO WHAT BENEFITS DID FRIMO ACTUALLY GAIN FROM THE PROJECT?

Our designers value the ease with which they can operate SAP PLM from CATIA, as well as the process security that we have gained. The project manager is thrilled that the development data relevant to him, along with all other significant project and metadata, is available directly in the form of interlinked PSP elements. And his colleagues in logistics are happy about how our bills of materials are now automatically forwarded from CATIA to SAP for further processing. The system automatically reconciles document BOMs and stock BOMs, meaning that BOM information is automatically updated in SAP when we change product geometry. At FRIMO, a single bill of materials can include up to 300 items. Transferring this information to the SAP system manually, as had to be done in the past, cost us a lot of time and was prone to errors. The process we're using now eliminates most of these error sources. So as I've said before, this project brought us process security, but it also gave us a clear increase in quality.

► WHAT DID THE TIMELINE OF THE PROJECT LOOK LIKE?

The needs analysis, the entire introduction of CATIA along with the add-on, i.e. the Drawing Manager, the interfacing with our existing plot management system - CENIT's SAP experts implemented all these within 4 months. During the same period, they also managed to install the content server and make several ABAP

adjustments to ensure that the solution was process-secure right from the start. So in view of what all we had to do, we stayed well with the timetable.

► DID YOU ENCOUNTER ANY MAJOR SNAGS?

One of the tough nuts to crack was how to interface SAP's plot management

with our own plotting solution, „Plotbase PM“. But in the end even that went very smoothly, thanks to the excellent cooperation with CENIT.

► WHAT EXPERIENCE HAVE YOU GAINED FROM THIS PROJECT?

Well, Stage 1 of the project in Freilassing is now complete, and we're busy planning Stage 2. And of course we'll again be relying on CENIT.

► WHAT SIZE OF INVESTMENT VOLUME ARE WE LOOKING AT ?

We're talking about approximately 50 consultant days and license costs, which add up to around 80,000 Euro.

► WHAT ASPECT OF THIS PROJECT MAKES YOU ESPECIALLY PROUD?

Together with CENIT, we managed to fully interlink our development processes and data with ERP. That means that here in Freilassing we have taken further steps to advance our IT strategy, namely to avoid interfaces and intensify the use of SAP.

“The process we're using now eliminates most of these error sources.”

Lorenz Dießbacher
IT manager of FRIMO Freilassing

► MR DIESSBACHER, WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTERESTING COMMENTS.

► ABOUT FRIMO FREILASSING - PLASTICS PROCESSING

As part of the FRIMO Group, the facility at Freilassing offers the complete spectrum of services related to thermoforming, laminating and edgelifolding of plastics components for a wide range of applications in different sectors. For the automotive sector, the facility also provides the competence center for all door paneling and interior trimming. Based on many years of expertise in a wide variety of different processes and procedures, FRIMO Freilassing provides tailor-made tools and machinery for, among many other applications, the manufacture of door panels, pillar cladding, armrest upholstery, and entire automotive modules.

Get more information about FRIMO Freilassing at www.frimo.com.



CONTACT

CENIT
Industriestraße 52-54
D-70565 Stuttgart

Tel.: +49 711 7825-30
Fax: +49 711 7825-4000
E-Mail: info@cenit.de
Web: www.cenit.de/sap