



HIRSCHMANN AUTOMOTIVE: BUDGETING WITH CENITCONNECT

For many years, globally renowned auto supplier Hirschmann Automotive has relied on SAP PLM and assistance by CENIT to successfully optimize its engineering processes. 2010 saw yet another optimization step, targeted at product evolution and change processes. The project team was thrilled with the intelligent process management solution cenitCONNECT due to its efficiency, security, and the transparency of the easily modeled processes.

Hirschmann Automotive's financial managers were also curious about cenitCONNECT and were excited to learn that the innovative solution could also be harnessed to non-engineering SAP processes. Right off, they decided to task cenitCONNECT with modernizing their budgeting process – and in fact achieved their goal even before the engineering solution was implemented.

As they watched the automotive industry grow ever more dynamic, Hirschmann's managers began to feel that their conventional, manual budgeting process was not transparent enough. cenitCONNECT, the believed, could deliver the transparency boost they needed.

Until 2010, the internal, cross-departmental and multi-site accounting coordination had to be done manually.

The actual status quo of the process could only be determined via a difficult, time-consuming procedure. That made the iteration process leading up to the adoption of the annual budget plans equally cumbersome.

Thus the project goal was clear: When tackling its financial planning for 2011,

phases – sales planning, cost planning, calculation and evaluation. These typical sub-processes were mapped using the new process management solution. The cenitCONNECT templates used for this purpose guaranteed efficient and secure workflow control, but required a precise definition of the processes and their

“The modernization meant a major efficiency boost for our budgeting process, and it created the transparency we need to manage a complex process.”

**Elisabeth Spiegel
Controlling**

Hirschmann Automotive already wanted to be able to exploit all the benefits of system support by cenitCONNECT.

► THE PROJECT

The first step, taken in partnership with Project Manager and Controller Elisabeth Spiegel, was a detailed inventory of the processes currently in place. The next was to map the four classic financial planning

objectives and interdependencies.

This approach achieved two positive effects at one go: The desired boost in process transparency as well as a high degree of process standardization.

And as it turned out, the company's financial management was highly satisfied with the excellent quality of the results achieved by the evaluation runs conducted after the completion of the



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annual plans for 2011. These evaluations were based on sophisticated checklists provided to all staff members involved in budget planning, taking their respective role and tasks within the process context into account.

► A CLEVER INVESTMENT

"In practice, we quickly saw a marked increase in the quality and security of the planning process", says Elisabeth Spiegel and explains: "In the past, most of our planning phases and tasks were sequential. Thanks to clever design of the workflows on the one hand and the increase in process transparency on the other, we managed to turn them into parallel processes." In this way, each process participant is aware at any time of the current status of every single (sub-) process, and of who is responsible for performing which task when. Additionally, the documents made available within the process context also do away with the bothersome searches for up-to-date planning versions or supporting documents. Thanks to the accelerated throughput, the auto trend-setter had to devote significantly fewer staff resources to the planning process.

► OUTLOOK FOR BUSINESS ACCOUNTING

Following the positive experiences with financial planning for 2011, Hirschmann Automotive is now determined to rely on systems support for its monthly financial statements too. What the financial officers have in mind is a well-functioning method for tackling the routine tasks that must be performed every month to amalgamate the financial figures coming in from across the Hirschmann Group.

Q2/2011 should see the first monthly financial statement managed fully via cenitCONNECT.

Going even further, Hirschmann has already decided to start automating the first sub-processes of its financial planning. The company wants to permanently improve processes and planning methodology, but that's by no means the only focus: As soon as possible, the global player also wants to achieve closer linkages between operative planning and strategic enterprise objectives. In other words, to replace the status-quo perspective with a future-oriented view.

► OUTLOOK FOR ENGINEERING

Initially, Hirschmann Automotive's technical segment became interested in CENIT's intelligent process management solution as a means for further enhancing the company's product evolution and

"In practice, we quickly saw a marked increase in the quality and security of the planning process. This made any inherent weaknesses apparent, and these weaknesses will be eliminated next year in the course of our ongoing improvement work."

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change processes. So Hirschmann is in a hurry to let its engineers get their hands on innovative methods that will bring frictionless, integrated development processes.



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