

Success Story: process automation with the inubit BPM-Suite

With 400 employees and an annual turnover of 90 million Euros, the Fliesen-Zentrum Deutschland GmbH belongs to the leading wholesale traders of tiles in Germany.

The family-owned enterprise was founded in 1895 and has subsidiaries in Trier, Leipzig, Magdeburg and Erfurt, and offers services all over Germany for more than 4,000 customers in handicraft and specialized trade for tiles.



The five subsidiaries of the wholesale trader Fliesen-Zentrum from Trier, Germany supply approximately 4,000 customers with an assortment of 120,000 articles.

The purchasing department currently has 20 employees who have constant contact to their vendors to guarantee a sufficiently stocked warehouse stock.

“A few years ago we pursued the idea to exchange orders, invoices, and dispatch notifications with our most import vendors from system to system rather than by telephone, fax, or e-mail” says Managing Director Markus Friedrich.

The problem: business partners had to be connected to the internal ERP system. However, manually programming of interfaces was out of question – the variety of systems and data formats on the 300 vendors sites was too large.



Markus Friedrich, Managing Director of Fliesen-Zentrum Deutschland GmbH:

“The application of the inubit BPM-Suite enables us to further improve internal workflows and to design more efficient processes.”

Higher efficiency of processes due to the flexible integration of internal systems and suppliers

In search of adequate integration software the inubit BPM-Suite was also tested, and it was convincing:

“The enormous flexibility of the software tool was decisive for the choice”, said Hendrik Sprejz, IT-Director of the Fliesen-Zentrum.

“We can now exchange EDI data as well as XML based data formats and messages like BMEcat and openTRANS.”

A further advantage: “The existing internal interfaces are displayed in a single tool. Thus service and maintenance is concise and easier.”

Together with the team of the Fliesen-Zentrum inubit connected the ERP system via a BaaN specific export-interface with the inubit BPM-Suite.

In 2005 the decision for the migration to SAP was made. Due to the modular

structure of the inubit BPM-Suite the changeover from the previous BaaN-interface to the SAP-interface was shortly realized.

For the business partners of Fliesen-Zentrum this modification did not result in any variations – the already productive communication channels have been retained unchanged.

The solution: stepwise implementation of the inubit BPM-Suite

As a pilot scheme, the SAP R/3 system of the Ulm-based Uzin Utz AG, was integrated via an EDIFACT interface. Since this company is absolutely convinced of EDI, all documents are now exchanged in the format EDIFACT D96.A. For further companies, e. g. PCI, Ardex, Villeroy & Boch, as well as Deutsche Steinzeug the integration via EDIFACT and openTRANS was realized.

Hendrik Sprejz: “When we connected the first vendor we were learning from inubit’s consultants but after few days we were able to connect all further vendors without help”.

According to Sprejz the employment of the integration software has already paid off by the integration of the suppliers:

“If we had programmed all connections to our vendors by ourselves the project

would probably not have been realized in that short time and would have cost a lot more – and the migration from BaaN to SAP in such an unproblematic way had never been occurred without the inubit BPM-Suite.

And apart from that we now have the possibility to realize further integration projects easily, quickly, and securely.”

The flexibility of the inubit BPM-Suite enables process automation in various fields

By using the multi-purpose utilizable BPM-Suite of inubit, Fliesen-Zentrum is now in possession of a standardized software whereby diverse processes could be optimized and automated. Therefore the inubit BPM-Suite is already implemented in various fields of the company:

Connection of suppliers

The concrete realization of the project was done with the Professional Edition of the inubit BPM-Suite. It allows processing of incoming integration tasks in parallel by preconfigured workflows. To connect the inubit BPM-Suite to the BaaN IV system the BaaN specific Bemis interface was used exporting data from the system in a special EDI version. In the line with the migration to SAP R/3 it was substituted by SAP-interfaces.

The project was realized together with the IT-team of the Fliesen-Zentrum Deutschland GmbH. Furthermore employees of the Fliesen-Zentrum had an one-day training at the inubit Training Center. Integration experts from inubit supported setting up the first connections. Now the IT-team is able to connect suppliers on their own.

Automation of internal processes

Beside the external business processes there are numerous in-house processes which were automated with the inubit BPM-Suite. For example, so far it was only possible to handle EDIFACT messages with invalid article numbers by dint of complex and paper-based processes. Today all relevant information were extracted and via e-mail in PDF-format provided to the responsible customer

advisor. As a further step it is planned to extend this process by a portal, so that faulty data could be corrected online and afterwards transferred automatically to the SAP system.

Electronic order processing

“After we connected the most important vendors, we now want to further simplify order processing”, so Managing Director Markus Friedrich.

A year ago a list of the assortment was presented in the Internet that contained general product and pricing information. The orders however, were made the conventional way. Now the online catalog will be extended to a real online shop that will enable customers to order immediately. Therefore the catalogs of suppliers which are existent in different formats (e. g. BMEcat, DATANORM or PRICAT) were electronically processed as well.

Friedrich: “Our customers now have the advantage of accessing actual information, products, sales discounts, or stock at any time. We expect that ordering by mouse-click will disburden our order acceptance noticeably.”



Figure: Comprehensive utilization of the inubit BPM-Suite at Fliesen-Zentrum

The project at a		glance
Benefit	Technology	Realization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cost-efficient execution of purchase and orders through completely automated processes Noticeable reduction of the error ratio during the data processing by EDI Process optimization by workflow-based sales management Real-time information per electronic interchange of catalog data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seamless integration of the ERP systems (SAP / BaaN) into internal and external business processes Connection of suppliers via different standards (e. g. EDIFACT, XML, openTRANS) Electronic interchange of catalog data via BMEcat, DATANORM and PRICAT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Joint realization of the first supplier connections in only a few days, further suppliers were self-dependently connected Independent migration of the interface from BaaN to SAP Automation of numerous internal processes by Fliesen-Zentrum