



Viega Lifts Enterprise Content Management to the Next Level to Support its SAP-Driven Business Processes with OpenText Technology

Future file solutions to be implemented based on OpenText Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions following Proof of Concept

Industry

Manufacturing

Customer



Business Challenges

- System limits prevent process improvement
- Despite developing their own interfaces, many changes still had to be made manually
- System and application barriers, had to be overcome for integrated process support and collaboration scenarios

Business Solutions

- OpenText Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions
- OpenText Content Server

Business Benefits

- Reduction in time spent by IT department on maintaining file based solutions
- Fully automated data transfer between SAP and OpenText systems enables process improvement and data consistency
- Content integration with business processes, increases productivity, creates transparency and supports creativity through collaboration

Viega: the best of tradition and innovation

The best of tradition and innovation are not necessarily contradictory—quite the opposite. Founded in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany in 1899, Viega is a medium-sized enterprise operating internationally and is the global leader in plumbing and heating technology and solutions. As one of the leading system providers for plumbing-related products, Viega exports to more than 75 countries, mainly via its own on-site sales organizations. Research and development, direct contact with the market, and continual optimization of relevant processes has provided the basis for this long-standing success. An important element of this innovation strategy is the company's own IT organization. The IT team is constantly focused on process improvement and are always monitoring the market for new solutions and technology, which would enable them to overcome any limitations of their IT systems and applications. Consequently, Viega has already implemented solutions such as digital customer files, which interfaces its own SAP environment with OpenText's Enterprise Content Management (ECM) solutions. The company will soon be taking things a step further with the OpenText Enterprise. In 2010, Viega completed a successful Proof of Concept (POC) for cross-system digital files with OpenText's latest offering for SAP: OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions.

Process-oriented thinking requires an ECM strategy

"Business processes are nothing without information and documents. These are created and managed not only within SAP, the core of our IT landscape, but also with other systems such as email or Microsoft Office for example," says Michael Nippel, Director of IT strategy at Viega. "From the viewpoint of users it's the process that counts, not the individual application or various user interfaces. All the necessary data and documents need to be available in one place, if possible. However, this requires a cross-system approach from the IT department. Back in 2004, we defined an ECM strategy geared towards this approach, the roots of which date back to 1999. At that time, Viega was already using the OpenText archive and created the first customer file using OpenText's SAP interface. In 1999, non-SAP documents, such as delivery notes, and customer correspondence were part of the electronic file, which was stored in the OpenText archive and referenced in SAP. This enabled them to be called up and displayed directly from the SAP user interface. "The close cooperation between OpenText and SAP and the high-level of integration of the archive were determining factors in our decision", emphasizes Mr Nippel.





More convenient for users: Files available from multiple interfaces

Digital files have created the ideal conditions for Viega's success in the area of sales. A wide range of vital information and documents relating to customers are now available through a number of interfaces. This includes for example, contracts, agreements received and sent via email, analysis from the business intelligence solution (SAP BW), or call notes. Not all of this information is of equal relevance for all user groups. "Each user group has its own specific requirement in terms of how the information and folder structure are displayed in the customer file", explains Mr Nippel. "In the past, this meant that users stored various information and documents on their own desktops or file servers, instead of in the file store, based on the OpenText archive." Viega's sales department is organized into teams, which on average provide 200 wholesale customers with support. In 2005, in order to harmonize processes across individual teams and promote cooperation between employees, Viega enhanced the solution with OpenText's document management system. Customer files were then implemented based on OpenText Content Server and the OpenText archive served as a central file storage location. Approximately 250 employees in Germany and the Netherlands use the solution, integrated with their email system, SAP ERP and SAP BW. This enabled price agreements and sales analysis in particular, which were maintained in SAP, to be transferred automatically to OpenText. Collaboration scenarios such as joint work on documents, could now be continually supported, regardless of the location. Experts from Viega's IT organization carried out the implementation of the necessary interfaces and workflows.

OpenText Extended ECM: From content to process management

The introduction of SAP CRM in 2007 maintained this approach, with customer files now able to be called up from the SAP Interaction Center interface.

"Work was made much easier for our sales colleagues with the introduction of SAP CRM", says Mr Nippel. While the customer master data is managed in SAP ERP for order processing, sales staff can maintain additional information in SAP CRM. Changes in SAP ERP, for example a customer's new head office address, are immediately transferred over to SAP CRM. Mr Nippel explains: "We wanted to have this kind of automated updating of changes for digital files too, without the need to develop a customized interface or undertake manual maintenance. This means that unstructured information and documents can be automatically put into the context of the process to enable real process-oriented thinking. We found that OpenText also shared our point of view when in 2010 they introduced OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions. We knew that we wanted to thoroughly test this solution and its integration in SAP, and if the results were positive, use it for future file solutions", says Mr Nippel.

Proof of Concept: OpenText keeps its promises

For the test scenario, Viega's IT experts configured a fully integrated customer file, merging information from both SAP and OpenText ECM. This enabled the company to test OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions under real conditions, both in terms of the number of employees working on the file concurrently and the volume of information to be managed. "We put the new OpenText solution through a real stress test. We had to verify that the fully automated data transfer from and back to the SAP system in OpenText worked—and not only under laboratory conditions. We are known in the IT sector for running realistic and meaningful tests. As such, the results are directly transferable to live operations without any restrictions", emphasizes Mr Nippel. "OpenText passed our tests with flying colors. The integration works flawlessly, changes in one system are executed in a matter of seconds in the other system. This also applies to adjustments to customer hierarchy, changes to business structures, etc., which can be referred to as the core competence in this integration scenario. We are convinced that by using OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions, we can make a big step towards attaining our goal of consistently process-oriented IT. Viega will therefore be using OpenText Extended ECM to implement future file solutions.

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