



A MORE MATURE SAP ORGANIZATION AT UMICORE THANKS TO SAP ERP UNIVERSITY

QUICK FACTS

Requirements

- Broaden the knowledge base of the staff
- Find a balance between internal and external staff
- Set up a more mature SAP organisation

Solution

- 5 employees participated in the SAP ERP University

Benefits

- More mature internal organisation
- More contextual insight in SAP technology
- Greater team spirit
- Fewer external experts for projects
- Only need for really specialised external staff

Umicore Information Systems has managed to raise the SAP knowledge a notch thanks to the SAP ERP University. Five colleagues of the SAP Project Delivery Line were sent to this 25 days broad training course and received an end-to-end overview of all the business processes in SAP ERP. They came back with greater insight in the integration and correlation between different business processes. With this knowledge the internal organization is better armed to take up projects and needs less assistance from external experts.

The initiative for the SAP ERP University was taken by Kurt Blaton, heading the SAP Project Delivery Line. His group has grown rapidly in recent years and now consists of more than 10 people, a mix of young and experienced. To better anticipate the needs at Umicore, one of the priorities was to enhance the SAP knowledge within the organization: "We had a lot of acquisitions, leading to a highly fragmented IT landscape. An SAP Roadmap was defined, which will lead to an integrated SAP landscape based on standard SAP solutions. In realising the SAP projects, we were confronted with limited knowledge in house. In many projects the balance has been wrong, often with up to 80% external personnel and only 20% Umicore personnel. The SAP ERP University helped us to increase the internal SAP knowledge."

To broaden the knowledge base of his staff quickly, Blaton sent five colleagues to the SAP ERP University.

This course provides very broad training in the SAP ERP applications in 25 days. In the first 10 days the students receive an end-to-end overview of all the business processes in SAP ERP and the integration and correlation between different business processes. The following week students examine specific process skills and implementation methodologies in greater depth. "The first ten days especially, when the students received a broad overview of all the processes, appeared to be very rewarding. People experienced in a specific ERP domain often have no insight into how their module fits in with the bigger picture and how the different business processes interact with one another. This course gives students the broader context and an insight into how their specialization fits in with other elements. After the initial 10 days they can use these insights to further deepen their specialization and implementation skills."





Growth in maturity

The younger participants in the course especially have gained in maturity, says Blaton: "I immediately noticed a change in attitude among those who have little experience in business. Now they are better able to place things in context. They have a much better idea about what others are talking about, especially in conversations with external consultants. They no longer just accept anything." That's one important aspect in which the SAP ERP University differs from other training programmes, according to Blaton: "We want to let our people grow into management roles, but not without first having had on-the-job experience

at the end of the training. "I saw from the grades that they really went for it. For us as a company, this is important as a performance indicator."

Fewer external workers

Kurt Blaton noticed that, thanks to the growth in knowledge within his team, he will have to bring in fewer external experts for projects. "And if it happens then they really will be experts and not just manpower like in the past," he affirms. "We deal with our suppliers differently and now we have more authority. I can deploy my people much more flexibly than before."

"Partly thanks to the University it's only now that I can really set up a professional SAP organization, with the possibility of growth at all levels."

Kurt Blaton, head of the SAP project delivery line at Umicore Information Systems

themselves. Training such as that provided by the ERP University can help us do this." Kurt Blaton admits that it wasn't self-evident suddenly sending five people to the course. "But it paid off. The results are greater than with other focused courses. Now I can deploy my people more widely and I can let them take more targeted courses. Besides all this, a real team spirit has developed and I noticed that after the five weeks a close-knit group had formed." The participants were very motivated throughout the course, and not just to get the certificate that came

Because of the increased knowledge within the team, Blaton can also be more selective in the projects that he takes on. With their enhanced knowledge, his staff can make assessments themselves and talk to the business. This also ensures better work relations. "I admit it: partly thanks to the University it's only now that I can really set up a professional SAP organization, with the possibility of growth at all levels. As far as I'm concerned, this training wasn't just a one-off," concludes Kurt Blaton.

PROFILE

Umicore is a materials technology group. Its activities are centred on four business areas: Advanced Materials, Precious Metals Products and Catalysts, Precious Metals Services and Zinc Specialties. The Umicore Group has industrial operations on all continents and serves a global customer base.

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