

SAP Customer Success Story

“mySAP PLM is the cornerstone of our information system.”

Gilbert Micaletti, Head of IT, SOLYSTIC



AT A GLANCE

Company Name
SOLYSTIC, France
www.solystic.com

Industry
Industrial machinery and components

Key Challenge
More rapid response to modifications requested by clients

Implementation Partner
Spring Technologies

Solution and Services
Direct interface between the mySAP™ Product Lifecycle Management (mySAP PLM) solution and CATIA V5

Existing Environment
mySAP PLM and the mySAP ERP solution for production, logistics, and finance

Implementation Highlight
Direct integration of technical data from computer-aided design (CAD) tools into mySAP PLM

Key Benefits

- Optimized management of documents and technical data stored in a single system
- Enhanced ease of use with improved interface between mySAP PLM and CAD tools
- More rapid response by the design department to modifications requested by clients

Hardware
IBM servers

Operating System
Microsoft Windows 2000

SOLYSTIC

mySAP™ PRODUCT LIFECYCLE MANAGEMENT SPEEDS RESPONSE TO CHANGE REQUESTS FROM CLIENTS

SOLYSTIC, a subsidiary of the Northrop Grumman Group, has been one of the driving forces in the automation of postal services for over 50 years. This French company, one of the two world leaders in the manufacture of letter and flat-mail sorting machines, provides turnkey solutions that include infrastructure, service, and material-handling equipment to postal operators, parcels operators, and mail consolidators. By directly integrating technical data from its computer-aided design (CAD) tools into the mySAP™ Product Lifecycle Management (mySAP PLM) solution, SOLYSTIC is able to speed up its response times to requests for modifications from its clients.

RAPID RESPONSE TO CLIENTS

Against the background of a difficult international economic situation where the ability to respond quickly to client requests is a major success factor, SOLYSTIC decided at the start of 1998 to reorganize its information landscape, which was then based on multiple systems with costly and complex maintenance requirements. To approach the year 2000 transition with confidence and with a future-oriented management system, the company decided to introduce integrated business management software.

The IT department evaluated three software vendors before deciding in favor of SAP, mainly because of its proven competence in the management of technical data. Implementation was completed successfully within 18 months. The enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, which was ready for operation by the middle of 1999, enables the management of technical data, finances, and human resources in the areas of purchasing, sales, production, and logistics.

“The direct interface between our ERP system and the CAD systems creates a unique user-friendly environment. This enables us to modify our products more quickly.”

Gilbert Micaletti, Head of Information Systems, SOLYSTIC

“A few years ago, we saw an additional change in our industry,” says Gilbert Micaletti, head of information systems at SOLYSTIC. “We have made the transition from a separate design-to-manufacturing process to a collaborative process. Our clients’ requests and the internal requests for modifications, which can total up to 10 a day, directly impact our delivery system and the manufacture and installation of our sorting machines.”

Rapid response to client requirements by the engineers in the design and systems departments is of key importance. To produce custom-built parts, the company uses several software packages: CATIA CAD software for mechanical and 3-D electrical components, and ELECTRE for electrical circuit diagrams.

DYNAMIC DATA EXCHANGE

At the beginning of 2003, an older CAD tool, Euclid, was replaced by CATIA. During the implementation of the CATIA software, the IT department realized it needed a data management tool that could ensure data coherence between CATIA and mySAP Product Lifecycle Management. The design department uses mySAP PLM to manage items, classification systems, technical data, and the definitions folders containing plans in Adobe PDF format.

To increase responsiveness to client requirements, the new data management tool had to meet the following criteria:

- Provide a single data store for integrating R & D processes into production and for simplifying item searches (cost reduction)
- Decrease the amount of time it takes to make information from the design department available to other areas within the organization (management method)
- Increase the flow of information to improve the productivity of the teams

The IT management had to select one of two options: indirect integration via a third-party solution or integration of the interface offered by SAP. “We carried out tests before we decided on the latter solution for reasons of coherence with our existing information system,” explains Micaletti. The direct interface between mySAP PLM and the two CAD systems enables dynamic data exchange between the CAD and ERP systems during collaboration, planning, and construction.

EXPERT IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT

SOLYSTIC decided to enter into a collaborative partnership with Spring Technologies, which has been an SAP partner since the end of 1999. “We have been working with Spring Technologies since July 2003 because of the company’s know-how in terms of integrating CATIA into mySAP PLM. They are real experts,” states Micaletti. “The company has been very responsive to our technical requirements, which are by no means standard.”

Spring Technologies has been given the following tasks:

- Implement the CATIA system, including end-user training
- Implement the CATIA interface to mySAP PLM
- Migrate CAD data from Euclid and integrate into CATIA and mySAP PLM
- Adapt existing business processes

SORTING OUT THE FUTURE

Integration will be performed in stages. To begin with, migration will be simulated, based on all the studies carried out over the last 20 years, to identify potential problems before the actual migration of data from Euclid to the CATIA system, which will occur from now until the end of the year. At the same time, 15 users in the design department will be trained in the methodology and maintenance processes.

“This unique interface enables the design department to simulate all modifications in mySAP PLM so that we can see directly the impact on the warehouse, inventory, external purchasing from partners, and spare parts at the clients’ workplaces . . . The interface gives our users overall insight into the effects of modifications and also enables them to choose between two different modifications. The interface also simplifies collaborative activities and reduces the time spent searching for data stored in the single SAP database. All files created in CATIA are saved in mySAP PLM,” explains Micaletti.

SOLYSTIC and Spring Technologies benefit from the ability to adapt the interface to integrate additional control elements and numerous modifications, thus eliminating the potential for errors caused by multiple recording of data. “The automatic integration of modifications enables us to recoup the cost of the complete CAD modification system and of the direct interface within two years,” concludes Micaletti.

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