

Success Story SAP - B-COMM for R/3 ERP

Neoplan Bus GmbH, Stuttgart – Germany

Control of production with state-of-the-art technology

NEOPLAN – a byword for first-class design and technology. Experts have good reason indeed for regarding NEOPLAN with its unmistakable forms and profile as the most innovative company in the industry. 1935 saw the start of an impressive success story in Stuttgart-Möhringen. It's the tale of a small coachbuilding company which rose to become a globally renowned brand. Its founder, Gottlob Auwärter, was particularly attached to busbuilding, especially after the war when the company really began to flourish. In 1953, a bus with the revolutionary and unique monocoque design was constructed at the Stuttgart plant: the first NEOPLAN was born.

Since the introduction of the product name NEOPLAN (1953) more than 35,000 buses were brought on the streets. NEOPLAN causes sensations again and again with its trend-setting innovations - the invention of the apron technology friendly to passengers, or the development of the 15 m class, etc. Many of the technical milestones which the enterprise has set in its just 70-year-old company history have become the common knowledge in the branch. For instance the Cityliner - the first high-wing coach in Europe, the Skyliner – the first double floor bus, or the Starliner - the new touring bus generation presented in 1996 which was a great success for the company.

NEOPLAN's headquarters are still in Stuttgart-Möhringen: Since 2001, the company belongs to the MAN Group. It offers as NEOPLAN Bus GmbH vehicles with the names NEOPLAN and MAN. The product range has been continuously renewed and improved and is based on sophisticated MAN technology.

All central departments are located in Stuttgart such as development of coaches and overland busses, marketing, finances, and after-sales organization.

Since the beginning of 2004, computer solutions of Kaba Benzing found their way into NEOPLAN's production halls in Stuttgart. The 16 year old devices were replaced by a new PDC (Production Data Collection) system. Production times are now recorded with state-of-the-art so-called 'touchscreen' terminals. The employee authenticates itself with a personal ID card. This card includes a photo of the employee and is also used as a picture ID.

The recorded data is transferred to the SAP R/3 system via a standard interface. With this data it is possible to view the buses' individual locations. Possible backorders in production are immediately recognized. Due to the transparent information, the production scheduler is able to initiate countermeasures immediately.

Together with the PDC system, the time and attendance system has also been switched to the new system. Each employee has a personal ID card with passport photograph. With this card the



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Thorsten Kölker -
Project Manager



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employee “clocks in and out” contactless at the new terminals. The employee can always view his or her personal status at the terminal, e.g. annual leave, flextime bank, etc. The problems that NEOPLAN had with the old system is --due to the certified interface to the SAP accounting system-- finally history.

Because the service contracts of the predecessor system expired at the end of 2003, the whole project team was pressed for time. Nevertheless the ambitious plan was successfully translated into action.

With the outstanding commitment of everyone involved and the great teamwork, it was possible to achieve the conversion in such a short period of time. The location in Stuttgart is now regarded as successful pilot project for all NEOPLAN production plants.

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