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Juergen Kohler  
IT Manager

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## Fürstenberg Gruppe, Donaueschingen

### **Made-to-measure solution - PDC increases transparency in German brewery**

For more than 700 years, the name Fuerstenberg has been linked with the great beer-making. This well-known beer is brewed in an ultra-modern brewing plant in Donaueschingen, in the Fuerstenberg principality, which belongs to Germany's nobility. About 600 employees work for the Fuerstenberg Group, which consists of the Fuerstlich Fuerstenbergischen Brauerei KG (brewery) and the Fuerstenberg Holzindustrie (lumber industry). An electronic time recording system keeps track of workers' hours and transmits the data to the Human Resources Dept. At the Fuerstenberg Holzindustrie, PDC (Production Data Collection) terminals are used, where job data and production data is booked and then made available to the SAP module PP.

### **Integrated Time & Attendance solution**

In both plants, a SAP R/3 system was implemented in 1993. Four years later, the human resources department went live with its time management system that allowed employees to enter their work times at 15 Kaba Benzing time recording terminals.

The system was able to accommodate the brewery, which works in two shifts, as well as the lumber plant, which works up to three shifts. «Before installing the Kaba Benzing system, the brewery had two other systems, but they could not interface with SAP», said Erik Hillenbrand, a member of the project team for the implementation of SAP PP at Fuerstenberg Holzindustrie. This needed to be changed so that the time management data would automatically flow into HR. This was enabled by the Kaba Benzing solution BCOMM for R/3 ERP, which was integrated into the HR module and runs automatically and invisibly in the background. It runs on Windows NT and takes care of a faultless data transfer between the SAP modules and the data collection devices. «The technical interfacing is very good», says Juergen Kohler, IT Manager at the Fuerstenberg brewery. «The installation of the Kaba Benzing solution was quick and easy. Since then the program works perfectly.»

### **PDC as supplement for ERP**

The Time & Attendance project was quickly completed and Fuerstenberg moved on to the second step - the by far more complex implementation of PP with integrated PDC.

# Success Story

In Fuerstenberg's lumber industry, production times needed to be recorded. «In our company we build-to-order in 8 to 9 very large production halls», explains Erik Hillenbrand. «Therefore we need a PDC system.» Often, we get orders on short notice that still must be delivered on time. «We wanted to process the current production messages in real-time so we could have the latest information at all times.» PDC could also provide the base for a more accurate calculation. «We needed to know the profit margin of each order», says IT Manager Juergen Kohler. So a project team was formed. The system had to be able to display production and be flexible - those were Fuerstenberg's specifications. The recording of critical production processes required special consideration. This included, for instance, cutting the materials, which is the first step of each production sequence and where several orders flow together. The wood is subdivided into parts in order to have as little cutting scrap as possible. The incurring labor time must therefore be booked on several orders. Implementing 20 PDC terminals took time and was completed step-by-step.

The swipe-readers sometimes didn't work well in the dusty production environment. Therefore the devices were reequipped with barcode hand readers. The staff had to be trained on inputting data via several dialog steps. «Because our processes are flexible, we need to have the option to modify certain things in the system», explains Erik Hillenbrand. For instance, employees sometimes have to change workstations, or enter the number of pieces and scrap. Now, when an employee logs in at a PDC terminal, a connection to the PDC server is established and all orders can be seen. At Fuerstenberg, this can be as much as 5,000 or 10,000 orders and one order can consist of 40 to 50 process confirmations. The server doublechecks that an employee can book a certain order and then accepts the data. The NT server has an SQL database. This is where the SAP data flows in and the PDC data can be written in. The B-COMM solution provides a faultless data transfer to the SAP system and is constantly updated. The system creates different evaluations and supports the post-calculation.

## **Expectations fulfilled**

At Fuerstenberg, the project is now completed and they are very satisfied with the system. «The PDC system answered all our expectations», attests Jürgen Kohler, «although we were not able to solve all our problems with PP. Limitless flexibility can just not be achieved with standardized software-based processes.» With the new PDC system, Fuerstenberg now knows exactly which orders are being processed and which ones are finished. «This way we have a good overview of manufacturing and also the sales department can get information about the current state of the orders», says Erik Hillenbrand. «This transparency is necessary today in order to offer our customers reliability», emphasizes Juergen Kohler. In the past documents had to be entered manually, today recording takes place automatically and evaluations are ready the next day. «Today, we are much closer to what's happening», summarizes Erik Hillenbrand, «and the quality of the data is much better.»