

Success Story

Koch, Neff & Volckmar GmbH, Stuttgart

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«It was an absolutely successful project which it was possible to implement with a small team in just six months. We would make the same decision again today, for the integration of the individual modules is outstanding.»

Holger Singer -
Head of Payroll Accounting

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KNV / KNO-VA - Tradition that keeps pace with the times

The companies Koch Neff & Volckmar GmbH (KNV) and Koch, Neff & Oetinger Verlagsauslieferung GmbH (KNO-VA), businesses run in the sixth generation of one family, can look back at a corporate history lasting 175 years. It began in 1829 in Leipzig, when they were established by Friedrich Volckmar as service providers for publishing houses and bookshops. The companies are active to the present day in the book sector as a link between the manufacturer (publishing houses) and retailers (bookshops). KNO-VA assumes the warehouse management and logistics of the complete program with a stock of approx. 160 million books for more than 160 publishing houses. Other services such as order handling, accounts receivable accounting and software solutions for the publishing sector make KNO-VA one of the most important delivery companies for publishing houses. With its 350,000 titles permanently in stock, KNV is one of the market leaders in the book wholesaler sector. With its own book van service and 200 HGVs, 6,500 bookstores at 2,500 locations are supplied overnight. Software for the order handling, material handling and Internet presences round off the offering for customers. To meet these logistic challenges, innovations were always the driving forces in the company's development.

Innovations in the personnel sector

Today, 2,100 employees at 2 sites and 18 branches are employed at the two companies. In the seasonal business, these are joined by another 200 or so employees. To be state of the art with this challenge too, the decision was taken in 2002 to replace the software for payroll accounting and time management which had run on the AS/400 platform for a long time and to replace the existing time & attendance terminals. As the payroll accounting was already done in one department for both companies, KNV in Stuttgart had the responsibility for the project. «We wanted an integration of payroll accounting and time & attendance to save ourselves the existing manual interface», says Holger Singer, head of payroll accounting and project manager of the SAP-HR introduction, describing one of the requirements. With the implementation of time & attendance near the workplace, the drivers on the road were also to be integrated in the automatic time & attendance. The time & attendance terminals were to provide the employees on site with their current time balances and vacation statuses. «We expected flexible analysis options for master data, payroll accounting and time & attendance results as well as an automatic interface to accounts from the software», emphasizes Holger Singer.

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Since SAP was already being used in the accounts, SAP HR as well as some solutions from other manufacturers were under consideration. Due to the high integration capacity, they opted in mid-2002 for SAP HR in combination with the time & attendance sub-system B-COMM for R/3 ERP from Kaba Benzing. They had seen this sub-system in use at some reference customers of Kaba Benzing. Together with the HR consultant KümmeL Wiedmann + Partner (KWP), they drew up a project plan that in only 6 months was to lead to the entire system going live with the SAP HR modules personnel administration, time management, payroll accounting, organizational management and candidate management. After all phases had been successfully completed, they installed a total of 32 time & attendance terminals of the type Bedanet 93 40 in the individual buildings and floors of KNO in Stuttgart and Cologne as well as 26 terminals of the type Bedanet 95 40 at KNO-VA in Stuttgart and Haiterbach. In addition, another 10 branches were equipped with terminals of the type Bedanet 93 20.

The communication software B-COMM for R/3 ERP from Kaba Benzing runs on a separate Windows 2000 server with which the Cologne site and the branches are linked via a dedicated line. «We were able to go live after just 6 months», explains Holger Singer. «Everything worked very well right from the start and we were already able to dismantle the old system in the middle of January.» In addition to the depiction of all the requirements and the optimization of the processes in the personnel department, it was e.g. also possible to halve the number of time models.

Access as the next step

After several months of the system running smoothly, the access control was also integrated. In Stuttgart, the installation of two turnstiles of Kaba Türsysteme and control of the barriers increased security and reduced the workload of the staff at the entrance. In Cologne, the existing access system was replaced and the access to the company premises and the data center controlled with the new system.

«Everything worked without any problems and since then the entire system has run smoothly in the background», says Holger Singer, summing up his experience with the system. «It was an absolutely successful project which it was possible to implement with a small team in just six months. We would make the same decision again today, for the integration of the individual modules is outstanding.» Holger Singer names several things as success factors: The involvement of the employees in the selection of the software, the flexibility of HR in analyses, the very good collaboration with KWP as a competent and committed partner for the introduction, and last but not least the stable system for time & attendance and access control from Kaba Benzing. Here, the reliability of the hardware, the good support and the smooth collaboration overall convinced us.