"SAP software is far ahead of the competition in terms of functional scope, and SAP software on Linux gives us a fast, reliable, and cost-effective environment."

Werner Klar, Chief Information Officer, SIEGENIA-AUBI KG

AT A GLANCE

Summary
Headquartered in Siegen, Germany, SIEGENIA-AUBI KG manufactures metal fittings for windows and doors. Formed from a merger, the company has 2,350 employees worldwide. Despite initial skepticism, management decided to extend AUBI's infrastructure, based on the mySAP™ Business Suite family of business solutions, across both companies and run the solutions on Linux.

Web Site
www.siegenia-aubi.com

Key Challenges
- Merge the IT systems of 2 companies
- Expand IT departments to support 3 times as many users
- Protect existing investment in server hardware

Project Objectives
- Complete integration within 9 months
- Provide a scalable, stable IT environment for the merged enterprise
- Control costs of the merger

Solutions and Services
- Extension of an existing Linux-based SAP® environment
- mySAP ERP and mySAP Customer Relationship Management solutions running on Linux

Why SAP Solutions
- Superior functional range
- Cost-effectiveness
- Extensive Linux support

Implementation Highlights
- Successful completion of one of the world's largest Linux-based mySAP Business Suite implementations
- Savings of tens of thousands of euros per year in server license fees
- No expensive server hardware required for Linux
- Installation of server upgrades without system reboots

Key Benefits
- Extremely cost-efficient server environment
- Low administration overhead
- Reliability, low maintenance, and stability of software and server environment
- Flexibility regarding future hardware choices

Implementation Partner
itelligence AG

Existing Environment
- mySAP ERP
- mySAP Customer Relationship Management
- SAP Advanced Planning & Optimization component
- Various non-SAP applications

Database
MaxDB

Hardware
Hewlett-Packard ProLiant servers

Operating System
SUSE Linux

SIEGENIA-AUBI

Newly Merged Company Uses SAP® Solutions on Linux to Integrate Operations

Headquartered in Siegen, Germany, SIEGENIA-AUBI KG was formed through a merger of two companies: SIEGENIA and AUBI. Creating one seamless enterprise from two companies with distinct cultures was a challenging task, especially with regard to integrating disparate IT environments and philosophies. SIEGENIA-AUBI formed a joint project team to evaluate the options available for accomplishing this task. SIEGENIA, the larger of the two companies, was using heterogeneous IT systems for individual business areas, such as sales and logistics. AUBI had implemented the mySAP™ ERP solution three years earlier in 1996 and was operating an integrated IT environment based on the mySAP Business Suite family of business solutions. To achieve maximum integration, AUBI's successful software infrastructure was chosen for the combined IT systems of the two companies. Despite initial skepticism, the decision was made to run the solutions on Linux.

A manufacturer of metal fittings and system solutions for windows and doors, SIEGENIA-AUBI has 2,350 employees worldwide and operates three manufacturing sites in Germany, one in Poland, and one in China. The company has warehouses and sales offices in most European countries and Korea, while two data centers, at Siegen and Hermeskeil, Germany, handle the entire data processing load for all sites.

SIEGENIA-AUBI's chief information officer, Werner Klar, strongly advocated extending the successful SAP® architecture across the newly formed company with €250 million in sales. "SAP software is far ahead of the competition in terms of functional scope, and SAP software on Linux gives us a fast, reliable, and cost-effective environment."

AUBI's IT partner, itelligence AG, was asked to prepare a feasibility study to assess the risk of extending AUBI's Linux-based systems to the merged enterprise. The result of the study was encouraging, and the management of SIEGENIA-AUBI decided to deploy mySAP ERP and the mySAP Customer Relationship Management (mySAP CRM) solution with Linux as the server operating system across the merged companies. This bold decision enabled SIEGENIA-AUBI to achieve maximum integration across the IT landscape and provides the company with the best cost-value ratio when compared to proprietary UNIX.

Trouble-Free Operation with Three Times the Load

The integration project itself turned out to be the easy part. Starting with the business processes supported by SAP solutions used at AUBI, the integration team developed a set of new processes that would cover the entire range of functions needed by the new company. It then deployed these new processes, which are supported by mySAP ERP and mySAP CRM.

To manage the increased workload – the number of users had tripled – SIEGENIA-AUBI purchased additional Hewlett-Packard ProLiant servers, installed SUSE Linux, and expanded the existing Linux and SAP environment. The company now operates one of the world's largest mySAP Business Suite implementations running on Linux, with well over 30 servers handling roughly 2 terabytes of data for 920 mySAP ERP and 230 mySAP CRM users. The SAP environment at the data center at Hermeskeil, Germany, covers accounting for the company's locations in Germany, Poland, Switzerland, and China. Company locations in France, Austria, and Russia will be included in the near future, with more countries to follow.

"We were confident from the beginning that SAP solutions running on Linux would be capable of handling an environment of this magnitude. They do so with ease," says Klar. "I wouldn't hesitate to add another 1,000 users if the need arose."

SIEGENIA-AUBI uses MaxDB as its database. Like mySAP ERP and mySAP CRM, MaxDB can be run on a Linux platform. "MaxDB is essentially the SAP development database, and it is a native Linux application," explains Klar. "It performs very well, requires very little maintenance, and is cost-effective. For us, this was an easy choice."

High Performance with Low Cost and Maintenance

The administration overhead associated with Linux is very low, and operating costs are dramatically below those associated with comparable, non-open-source operating systems. "We save expensive license fees on each server," reports Klar. "We are able to use low-end server hardware – hardware that performs exceedingly well with Linux but costs significantly less." The Linux platform has proven to be extremely reliable, which means SIEGENIA-AUBI needs less system redundancy than with most traditional installations. "We have never had any major problems or crises – no crashes or other incidents that would compromise the integrity of our systems," says Markus Döhr, SIEGENIA-AUBI's IT systems administrator.

Another fact he appreciates about Linux is that operating system updates and patches can usually be deployed without having to reboot the servers. Only kernel updates require a system reboot. This keeps user disruption to a minimum. In addition, security patches occur much less frequently than with most other operating systems, since Linux is not a primary target for computer viruses or hacker attacks.

For support, SIEGENIA-AUBI relies on the Linux competence centers of SAP and Hewlett-Packard, the manufacturer of most of SIEGENIA-AUBI's server hardware. "The competence centers have been excellent sources of support," says Döhr. "This support has been free of charge and covers all the needs of the SIEGENIA-AUBI IT department."

Experience Builds Confidence

For SIEGENIA-AUBI, the Linux operating environment for mySAP ERP, mySAP CRM, and the SAP business information warehouse functionality has more than met the expectations of IT and business management in terms of performance, speed, reliability, availability, security, and cost-effectiveness. It is not without pride that CIO Klar and his IT systems administrator emphasize: "This is what we stand for. We chose this route being fully aware that many would view our decision with skepticism. But we knew what we were doing and have demonstrated that it works." Klar plans to migrate other applications as soon as they become available for Linux.

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