

ACTIVE USE OF SUPPLYON AND COMMITMENT IN WORKSHOPS PAYS OFF

The use of electronic platforms to enhance collaboration processes has unquestionably been driven by manufacturers and their major suppliers. Meanwhile, however, smaller companies are also recognizing the benefits of these platforms.

Vacuumschmelze in Hanau, Germany, utilizes SupplyOn applications since several years and takes the Internet platform as a chance.

Bernd Oestreich, a member of staff in the central IT department at Vacuumschmelze, helped shape his company's involvement with SupplyOn from the very beginning. SupplyOn was introduced at the end of 2002. When Siemens VDO began to progressively switch over its communications with suppliers to SupplyOn, Vacuumschmelze also took the "strategic decision" to opt for SupplyOn, reports Oestreich. Besides the ability to submit quotations electronically, the company also has access to documents via the Document Manager, receives assessment data via the Performance Monitor and can optimize production with the aid of Inventory Collaboration.

Bosch, Continental Automotive Systems and ZF. There were already business relationships in existence with these companies before the utilization of SupplyOn, but as Oestreich explains: "Processes with these tier-1 companies were standardized as a result of working with SupplyOn." Looking back, Bernd Oestreich takes a relaxed view of the steps involved in implementation: "To start with of course, there were a lot of details that demanded attention. For example, the question of whether colleagues working with SupplyOn had the right Internet options to support an SSL connection and which proxy settings were available. But that has long since been sorted out. Today the electronic processes in SupplyOn's various functionalities are part of our working reality."



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Bernd Oestreich,
Central IT Department Vacuumschmelze

The synergy effects of the platform were quickly experienced. In addition to Siemens VDO, Vacuumschmelze was soon linked via SupplyOn to a series of other customers, including

Vacuumschmelze GmbH & Co. KG

Vacuumschmelze develops, manufactures and markets special magnetic materials and related products. The company based in Hanau generates annual sales in the order of EUR 270 million, employs a workforce of over 3,000 and is represented in more than 40 countries on all five continents. Its broad range of high-quality semi-finished products, parts, modules, components and systems are used in an equally wide variety of areas and industries: from clocks to aircraft manufacturing. Bosch and Siemens VDO Automotive rank among its biggest customers in the automotive sector.

Hoping for consistent rollout

Naturally with an application as complex as SupplyOn, there is always the potential for optimization. The biggest cause for concern for Vacuumschmelze is the fact that it regularly finds itself dealing with parallel processes, even with customers already using SupplyOn. For example, the company may receive documents from a customer both on paper and electronically via SupplyOn. Bernd Oestreich is keen to see the quick and consistent rollout of SupplyOn functions: "The aim is to process all activities for these customers solely via SupplyOn." The various workshops which SupplyOn regularly holds for its partners and customers provide a medium for feedback of this kind.

Discussions here cover both the individual functionalities of the SupplyOn modules as well as suggestions of a strategic nature. Oestreich appreciates this forum: "We have the impression that our voice is genuinely listened at these workshops and specific topics are visibly progressed. In the case of the Document Manager, for example, we are now seeing concrete developments which originate from our suggestions." This is also a useful forum for the exchange of ideas between suppliers: "Through these workshops, SupplyOn has succeeded in steadily raising the acceptance of its platform on the part of suppliers."



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