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AVDEL

SAP Ready-to-Run R/3 on IBM DB2 Universal Database

The team members from SAP, BIC and Avdel needed only 10 days to install R/3 for the company's financial sector. Avdel, the industrial fastening systems specialist based in Langenhagen, Germany, managed the feat together with the Bad Oeynhausen, Germany-based SAP Logo Partner BIC. The result: a fully operational R/3 System, which Avdel is now gradually extending.

Company profile

A unique achievement: in 36 successive quarterly reports, Textron has posted continuous growth and profits. As the name implies, the American company began its operations in the textile sector, but now has a comprehensive product palette, including market operations in the aero-space, automobile and finance sectors, as well as in industry. In fact, only the company's name is a reminder of its origins.

The company, which posted global revenues of $10.5 billion in 1997, achieved its rapid growth by acquiring a number of other companies, parti-cularly during the 1990s. In 1994, for example, it acquired the British company Avdel plc., and in the process bolstered its share in the market for fastening systems. Today, Avdel is a key player in the Textron Fastening Systems Group with 68 plants in 17 countries, and total sales of $ 2.9 billion (1997). In Europe alone, the company has a headcount of 5,400 staff working at 19 production plants, nine of which are in Germany.

Despite the company structure, all enterprise areas operate to a large extent as independent companies. Textron is able, therefore, to combine the advantages of operating on a worldwide scale, making it the world's largest supplier of fastening systems, with the benefits of having a mid-sized company culture.

Ready-to-Run R/3 on Netfinity and DB2 Universal Database

The IT structure is also largely decentralized. In 1996 the Avdel office in Langenhagen set about overhauling its software infrastructure – spurred on by the need to reconsider its own application backbone for the Year 2000 and the euro. The aim was to keep the existing packaged software running on the AS/400®, and at the same time make it Year-2000 compliant. Avdel also decided to make a break with the past, and have its R/3 run on IBM® Netfinity® servers and DB2® Universal Database® on Windows NT® in its financial sector.

Avdel TEXTRON

SAP™

(Stefan Timpe, IT Manager at Avdel)

If updating a live software solution is considered challenging, imagine what parallel R/3 implementation involves! For Avdel the offer from the SAP Logo Partner BIC in Bad Oeynhausen came at just the right time: Ready-to-Run R/3 on IBM Netfinity and DB2 Universal Database at a fixed price including the hardware, system configuration and training — an offer the company could hardly refuse. The IT Manager at Avdel, Stefan Timpe, is full of enthusiasm: "Ready-to-Run R/3 is the best choice for us in terms of both costs and time". And what is more, the time needed for implementation indeed broke all records.

With the support of the IBM DB2 laboratory in Boeblingen, Germany, the R/3 experts at BIC preconfigured both Netfinity 7000 systems — implemented as test and live systems — in line with IBM and SAP specifications; they then prepared the systems for transport and took them to Avdel in Langenhagen. Here the installation, configuration, data transfer and training took place alongside existing business operations at Avdel — after just 10 days Avdel employees opened the first charts of accounts. R/3 was up and running.

There is a clear advantage in having a pre-defined, pre-configured Basis system standardized and released by SAP:

"The workshops showed us that we ourselves can carry out normal R/3 support work immediately, through backups, performance analyses and database management"

(Stefan Timpe, IT Manager at Avdel)

With respect to special activities, BIC in Bad Oeynhausen is responsible for remote support. This is also a fundamental advantage of standardized R/3 implementation.

Here, tools such as the System Administration Advisor (SAA) play a key role. Since the database administrator is dialog-supported, the database at Avdel can, for the main, be configured independently. Avdel opted for the IBM DB2 Universal Database on Netfinity because employees were already familiar with the database system using AS/400, and therefore it was possible to change within the DB2 family without considerable training overheads. "Nevertheless there are big differences between both systems and, in this respect, tools such as SAA have helped us significantly", claims Stefan Timpe. Experience shows that the Control Center and Script Center for automating the database administration, tools that are included in the service, have significantly simplified implementation of the R/3 System and the IBM DB2 database on which it operates. For this reason, IBM specially enhanced these tools for SAP Ready-to-Run R/3 systems. Advel's IT Manager stated, "Only once did we have a blue screen during implementation — otherwise the system has been running smoothly from the outset."

An essential element of having Ready-to-Run R/3 on Netfinity is the sizing of the system and the network structure that includes the configuration of the router to SAP's OSS. "People know what they are doing," states Mr Timpe, demonstrating that he has full confidence in the consultancy work of IBM, SAP and BIC.

Grace to Ready-to-Run R/3 Avdel has been able to realize on the one hand a high level of functionality and integration coupled with corresponding complexity, and, on the other, a short implementation time based on the preconfigured hardware and software package.