



A strategic business platform using abas Business Software

Based on extensive know-how and close cooperation with renowned reagent manufacturers, STRATEC Biomedical Systems AG is one of the best addresses for the development of technologies and systems for the analysis of biological and chemical substances.

The STRATEC Biomedical Systems AG based in Birkenfeld-Gräfenhausen, Germany, was founded in 1979 as STRATEC Elektronik GmbH. In 1987 STRATEC for the first time developed medical analyser systems. The STRATEC Biomedical Systems AG has, in the last few years, developed into one of the top partners of globally operating diagnostic companies. The basis for this prominent position is the linking of customer-specific methods of analysis with by STRATEC developed and adapted automated analyser systems. STRATEC AG plans, develops and produces these fully automatic analysis systems for partners in the clinical diagnostic investigation and biotechnology sectors. These partners market the systems worldwide as systems solutions, together with their reagents, to research establishments, laboratories and blood banks.

The strategic targets for STRATEC Biomedical Systems AG are the placement of STRATEC as the leading provider of integrated systems in diagnostic and biotechnology and the focus on short "time to market" development. At the moment, more than 120 highly qualified staff are employed at STRATEC Biomedical Systems AG, the majority are technicians or graduates. More than 65% of STRATEC staff members operate in product development. The average age of the employees is ca. 35 years.

The product range covers luminescence analysis devices, measuring devices for fluorescence, photometric analysis devices, fully-automatic immunoassay systems as well as pipetting and sample preparation systems. Typical areas of use are clinical diagnostics and pharmaceutical research. In addition, the STRATEC technology is employed in the petrochemical industry for the verification of additives as well as in the food industry for the detection, determination and quantification of bacteria, microbial contamination, pesticides or carcinogenic substances.

The realization of the development concepts takes place in numerous small and medium-sized companies in the surrounding region, which in the main produce modules for the various STRATEC products. Key tasks like development, prototype construction, quality assurance and final inspection, however, only take place in-house.



Increasing demands on EDP

The enormous expansion at the start of the 90s naturally could not have been managed without the aid of an EDP system. Rolf Maas, responsible for the IT system back then, remembers: "There were only a small number of networked 286 PCs on which only a few - very restricted - programs for parts list management and for purchases were running. We were not happy with this solution since it was not possible to expand the software without great effort. On top of this the system was not very reliable and frequent failures occurred."

With the expansion of the company, the requirements for an EDP solution became more urgent. In particular, considerably more products had to be administrated. For this reason, Rolf Maas together with the management team and some employees from the specialized departments analysed various business solutions. The decision for abas Business Software was made at the start of 1991. "What particularly pleased us about this solution was that the programs could be adapted to one's individual needs", according to Maas. "That was not possible with most other systems." Rolf Maas sees further advantages "in the great flexibility of abas Business Software, also the purchase costs are by all means acceptable."



abas Business Software did convince as suitable for medium-sized companies. Average data technology systems were too expensive and too involved. By virtue of the uncomplicated guidance systems available to abas Business Software users, STRATEC employees inexperienced with EDP could find their way quickly into the new ERP programs.

Introduction of ERP

Some weeks prior to the installation of the system, three STRATEC employees were introduced to the most important basic functions of the abas Business Software. For this reason they were able to carry out first operations right from the start. A new number key was set up for the parts and the data was adopted from the previous program. For this, the abas database loader was a valuable help. Afterwards the product master files were set up.

In the first phase of putting the system into operation, some meetings between the system experts and the employees concerned took place. In the main, they were concerned with bringing internal company processes into line with the program functions of the abas Business Software, which resulted in changes to some internal processes. "Thanks to the variable user interface as well as the tools which the system provides in the form of report generator, mask generator, database loader and additional database, we were in the position to adapt the system to our needs in an optimal way", according to Rolf Maas.

Then followed the introduction of the programs in the areas work scheduling, purchases and sales. When all important tasks at STRATEC could be dealt with using the system, Rolf Maas and the current IT manager Peter Stalling, received further training to familiarize them with the advanced functions. "Then", confirms Peter Stalling, "we had complete control of the system and are now able to implement even complicated alterations ourselves."

After the transfer of the operating processes to the server, the entire raw material planning is taken over by the abas Business Software. In addition, the work standard and standard time for the supply companies are outputted. Meanwhile a network is also linked via a server so that the employees from the construction and design departments have direct access to data like e.g. parts lists, prices etc in the abas system. Peter Stalling: "Given the very limited range of standard parts and the fact that most of the parts are subject to constant alterations, the STRATEC product master files are extremely extensive. Since we are endeavouring to be able to react immediately to market and customer demands, we have few finished products in stock. As a consequence, we have to manage very complicated parts list structures and in this regard abas Business Software provides especially valuable support." Important tools in the operational processes are the additional databases integrated into the abas Business Software. With their help, the management of serial numbers, the management of missing parts as well as the provision of materials for the "extended workbench", the subcontractors, can take place at STRATEC.

Continued first-rate contact

STRATEC emphasize in particular the support by ABAS. "The first-rate contact with the system provider continues", stresses Peter Stalling. "Via the helpdesk, the appropriate abas specialists can be contacted at any time. Additionally, there is the option that abas experts link to our system by modem in order to be able to carry out changes." Thus new program versions are also transferred to the STRATEC server.

