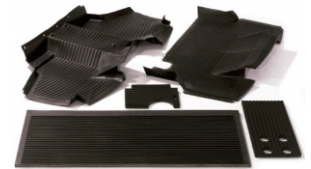




# Plastocell

## Automotive components supplier Plastocell has its business processes firmly under control – with abas Business Software

The revenues of European automotive component suppliers are shrinking. High debts and limited capital resources even aggravate the situation. With the increasing competition and intense cost pressure it is the co-operation between those concerned along the value added process that decides on success. How to fight keen competition successfully using state-of-the art business IT can be seen by the example of Plastocell, a medium-sized automotive components supplier. With abas Business Software, a flexible, future-proof ERP software is in use that is capable of adapting to the changing requirements of Plastocell. The abas Business Software contains an integrated EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) function which is an important criterion when choosing a business software for automotive component suppliers.



### High quality heat and cold insulation products

Plastocell Kunststoff GmbH develops and markets high quality heat and cold insulation products. 80 employees process, refine and serialize special cellular material, sound absorbing insulation and textile composites in Schifferstadt (Germany). "Simply the best" best describes Plastocell's company philosophy. Meeting customer requirements and desires clearly stands in the foreground. In order to fulfil them, Plastocell has set up a quality management system and has been certified according to the German Industrial Norm DIN EN ISO 9001:2000 and the automobile norm VDA 6.1. Production is based on state-of-the art technology, modern machines and experienced employees. Production mainly focuses on acoustically effective systems that are employed in the construction of automobiles, commercial vehicles and railway vehicles. The automotive area makes up 30% of the turnover.



Apart from automobiles, the Schifferstadt components supplier has been putting increasing emphasis on acoustically effective systems in the commercial and railroad vehicle sector. That is where the greatest potential for growth is expected within the next few years.

### Expansion in the automotive sector calls for new company IT

The expansion of the company and constantly growing automotive part of the production were deciding factors for Plastocell to look for an EDI integrated business software.

Heike Dohn, responsible for the selection of the new business IT: „Until mid 2003 we had various computing systems, which were not linked to each other, in operation. Aswell as working with EDI, we use the ERP software (Enterprise Resource Planning) Comet. Because the EDI system is not connected to the ERP system, a data transfer was time consuming and prone to error. Additionally, the software maintenance was set up by Comet.”

### abas ERP package for medium-sized businesses suits best

Consequently Plastocell looked for a new business software. After having obtained information via the Internet and at trade fairs, the shortlisted manufacturers were invited to Schifferstadt to give a demonstration of their software. Project Manager Dohn: "There were several reasons for choosing the ABAS software: The system is flexible and can be easily adapted. abas ERP is constantly being developed and every year a new version is released, so that we promptly profit from the technological progress.



## User Report

### Automotive and supply industry



This and the firm economical base of the system manufacturer guarantees security in our investment. Moreover, a methodical implementation concept was presented to us by the supervising abas software partner, the ABAS Projektierung Rhein Main GmbH situated in Langen near Frankfurt. It convinced us and gave us security. Of course abas Business Software integrated EDI functionality was an important factor for us when choosing abas ERP." ABAS also scored in the areas cost/performance ratio and Linux. Plastocell had just recovered from a virus attack and wanted to use Linux as the server operating system for security reasons. Here the Linux pioneer ABAS has gained valuable experiences. Meanwhile already 80% of over 1,600 abas business installations run using the Penguin operating system.

#### Step by step implementation

In February 2003 the project team, consisting of Plastocell employees and the abas implementation partners, met for a so-called Kick Off meeting in Schifferstadt in order to work out a software implementation schedule. The meeting was followed by a training course for the key users, and subsequent practice phase using a practice client installed at Plastocell. Therefore, everyone who was to work with the abas Business Software in the future had a chance to become familiar with the new system. There was also an EDI training course. EDI was the first module to be implemented by Plastocell. In October 2003 it was followed by sales, purchasing and production. Stefan Kropp, authorized representative and Head of Quality Management at Plastocell remembers the following situation: "We never got the PPC system Comet to run properly in production. When the abas Business Software was implemented everything changed. Now there is an uninterrupted flow of data and we have been able to optimize the production process step by step. This is partly due to the fact that other applications have been connected to the ERP system, as for instance our archiving system EASY".

#### Increase in productivity

Hubert Dohn, authorized representative and Head of Sales and Purchasing, at Plastocell sums up the benefits of the new business IT as follows: "The quality of evaluations has improved. Transparency has increased. The abas Business Software provides multifaceted analysis and controlling tools. The organizational processes in the company have become more secure and effective. As long as we were using Comet, EDI had to also run. But we didn't really benefit from it. Now EDI has become a part of our ERP complete business solution. For the first time we're actually profiting from the possibilities EDI has been providing for a long time. The automotive components supplier has EDI guidelines which abas ERP take into account in the case of EDI messages (e.g. forecast delivery schedules, credit notes, ESP messages). The requirement data, such as forecast delivery schedules or JIT delivery schedules of automotive components suppliers, are received per EDI and automatically transferred to the system's sales order processing and/or shipping processing. We can now automatically transfer the submitted planned quantity into the production plan. In the case of parts which have not been produced by us we will receive a required quantity message with the corresponding purchase order suggestion. Our vendors judge us on delivery service and, price and product quality. This is where the abas goods issue processing comes in. It uses the requirements quantity processing and then suggests shipping activities. abas ERP now accompanies all activities from the shipping suggestion list, including the packaging material management using the creation of shipping documents, such as goods issue/receipt slips and bills of lading, right up to the electronic registration of a delivery arriving at a customer." Stefan Kropp is optimistic about the future: "The abas Business Software supports continuous improvement procedures in our company. We are able to open up markets for our new products, for instance rail vehicles, without requiring any additional staff." And he adds, smiling: "We are well equipped for the challenges of the future".