



Overview

Country or Region: Germany

Industry: Retail

Customer Profile

Established in 1949, adidas is one of the world's leading manufacturers of sports clothing and footwear. In 2005, the company achieved a turnover of U.S.\$8.5 billion.

Business Situation

The company stored information for product timelines and activities on Microsoft® Office Excel® 2003 spreadsheets, and employees spent thousands of hours manually adjusting their own deadlines and tasks.

Solution

adidas worked with holert.com to deploy its Allocatus solution and Microsoft Office Project Server 2003, which provides a view of all project timelines and updates schedules automatically.

Benefits

- Access to updated project activity.
- Improved resource organisation.
- Clear increase in productivity.
- Dramatic reduction of scheduling errors.
- Marked increase in time savings through automation.

Sportswear Company Saves U.S.\$2 Million a Year with Calendar Management Solution

“The overview of all product calendars and the various opportunities to filter and compare data make it considerably easier to foresee impending bottlenecks, both at a personnel and company level.”

Jochen Denninger, Head of Process and Systems Management, adidas

From its headquarters in the Bavarian town of Herzogenaurach, the adidas Group coordinates the hundreds of processes involved in running a globally successful textile company. Employees at adidas must continually manage changing deadlines and priorities and quickly communicate updates worldwide. When the company expanded its operations, it recognised the need for an easy-to-use and effective calendar management system. Previously, employees had to transfer all timeline and event changes from Microsoft® Office Project Professional 2003 to their Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 calendars—a time-consuming and error-prone process. With the help of Microsoft Certified Partner holert.com, adidas implemented Microsoft Office Project Server 2003, which transfers all project tasks into employees' Outlook 2003 calendars automatically.



“With thousands of employees relying on the spreadsheet for details, a considerable amount of company time was spent coordinating diaries.”

Jochen Denninger, Head of Process and Systems Management, adidas

Situation

Germany-based clothing and footwear company adidas has achieved iconic status worldwide, with many sporting, music, and fashion celebrities seen wearing the brand. The company's distinctive three-stripe logo has become synonymous with fashion.

The company has long used Microsoft® Office Project Standard as the management application for planning the manufacture and distribution of its products. The system, however, lacked an important functionality—it could not automatically communicate product calendars to individual departments and employees worldwide.

Calendars play a vital role in the production process. Meetings with designers to discuss designs, collaborate on marketing plans, and select fabrics make up the day-to-day processes of manufacturing adidas products. Because calendars detail the relevant deadlines, tasks, and milestones relating to the various product lines, it is imperative that calendar information be available to all people participating on the same project.

The company's previous calendar system offered only a manual project procedure, by which information was exported into a Microsoft Office Excel® 2003 spreadsheet and then made available on the group intranet. Project members had to refer to this spreadsheet and then manually transfer deadlines to their personal Microsoft Office Outlook® 2003 calendars. Needless to say, these transfers took a great deal of effort and cut into time that could be spent on more valuable tasks.

Jochen Denninger, Head of Process and Systems Management at adidas, says: “With thousands of employees relying on the spreadsheet for details, a considerable amount of company time was spent coordinating diaries.”

Without an automatic calendar update, project members received notification of delays and timeline changes by e-mail. Because the person responsible for notifying the group had to identify the relevant recipients depending on their project role and status, each e-mail required a new recipient group.

Worse yet, project and department managers couldn't be certain that all members would read the notification e-mail, check the intranet spreadsheet, and make appropriate changes to their calendars. With approximately 4,000 employees using the system worldwide, adidas spent more than 4,500 working hours on scheduling updates every year.

Because about 90 product calendars needed to be coordinated each season, bottlenecks naturally occurred. Without a shared central database, harmonising the calendars required considerable effort. “Our planning department alone had to compare 50 calendars continually to see if enough resources were available for individual projects,” Denninger says.

Solution

Denninger was confident Microsoft could provide the solution and that it could be smoothly integrated into the existing system. “Calendars already exist in Microsoft applications, and we knew this meant we would spend minimal time on data migration,” Denninger says.

adidas needed a system that enabled its employees to read, edit, and centrally store individual product calendars. More important, the system had to grant project members automatic access to relevant schedules in their own calendars.

“The calendar management system based on Project Server 2003 is a huge step forward for us compared with an offline solution.”

Reinhard Denk, Senior Business Consultant, adidas

Microsoft Certified Partner holert.com specialises in the implementation of Enterprise Project Management solutions, including the integration of Microsoft Office Project Server 2003 with Microsoft Outlook and Lotus Notes. The consultancy provided adidas with a calendar management system based on its in-house solution Allocatus and Project Server 2003.

Allocatus synchronises Microsoft Project tasks with a user's individual calendar or to-do list, automatically updating the data as changes occur. Depending on organisational requirements, Allocatus enters a project as an all-day event, splits it into several appointments, or displays it as a task. Employees can track any changes to timelines with the Change History function, which eliminates the need for inputting every change individually. Now, scheduled tasks and deadlines are available at the click of a mouse and sorted by concept or department.

Project Server provides a central location for all adidas employee project calendars. They can be viewed by all employees working in the 30 adidas locations worldwide. Group members can now view their own schedules through Microsoft Office Project Web Access 2003 as well as other calendars and activities, together with relevant schedules and deadlines.

Reinhard Denk, Senior Business Consultant, adidas, says: “The calendar management system based on Project Server 2003 is a huge step forward for us compared with an offline solution.”

Benefits

With the centralisation of all calendars and the real-time transfer of timeline and project activities to Outlook 2003, employees can keep abreast of changing schedules and priorities continually. As a direct result of the

time saved with this solution, adidas is now saving about U.S.\$2 million per year.

Employees Streamline Projects with Centralised Calendar Access

Now that all calendars are centralised in Project Server, employees involved in a particular project can track all activity details. What's more, managers can schedule and modify tasks and deadlines knowing that other members of their product team will receive the changes.

With automatic calendar updates, the solution immediately communicates changes and amendments made by one individual to other members of the project group. This ensures that workflow is uninterrupted, delays are minimised, and projects completed on time and to budget.

The solution puts adidas employees “in the picture” instantly, even when deadlines and tasks relate to them only indirectly. Colleagues can be aware of each others' whereabouts and the projects in progress. As a result, employees benefit from an increased awareness of company activity as a whole and gain a greater sense of achievement from their role in the overall process.

Managers Avoid Problems with Efficient Planning of Project Resources

Organising people is an essential part of product development. Now that calendars are centralised, planning managers can view individual and project calendars and assess availability across the business.

Previously, planning managers had to spend a great deal of time trying to identify whether an employee was available for a project. “The overview of all product calendars and the various opportunities to filter and compare data make it considerably easier to foresee impending bottlenecks, both at personnel

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For more information about holert.com products and services, call +49 70046537826 or visit the Web site at: www.allocatus.com

For more information about adidas products and services, call +49 9132 84 0 or visit the Web site at: www.adidas.com

and company level.” says Denninger. “With this insight, we can react quickly and amend our resource allocation to prevent any problems before they happen.”

Solution Saves Time and Helps Employees Focus on “Jobs They Do Best”

Before project calendars were centralised, employees spent time checking the intranet regularly for any changes to an assigned project’s timelines and activities. With the new solution in place, they have gained an additional 4,500 productive hours a season. The company can now use this time to achieve real business benefits.

“Previously, administration time tied up employees,” Denninger says. “Now, they can focus on new projects, work more efficiently in their teams, and concentrate on the jobs they do best.”

Solution Reduces Process Errors and Helps Employees to Meet Tight Deadlines

To keep up-to-date on project activity, adidas employees used to have to amend the project spreadsheet, communicate changes using e-mail, and then enter those changes into a personal Outlook calendar. Accidental errors sometimes resulted in costly delays to production.

Now that changes are communicated to relevant calendars immediately, human error is marginal. Denninger says: “Access to accurate and updated calendars has resulted in our employees being more disciplined with regard to meeting deadlines.”

Microsoft Server Product Portfolio

For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to: www.microsoft.com/servers/default.aspx

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Microsoft Office Project Server 2003
- Microsoft Office System
 - Microsoft Office Project 2003
 - Microsoft Office Outlook 2003