PRODUCTIVITY UP – COSTS DOWN

Can't be done? Sure it can – by integrating application management into product lifecycle management (PLM) and cooperating closely with CENIT. For Webasto AG, a leading global supplier to the auto industry, such cooperation is a major priority. The company based in Stockdorf near Munich interacts with customers and suppliers from around the world.

So it's vital for Webasto that the scope of the company motto, "Feel the Drive", also extends to its IT sector. Without close, coordinated and frictionless cooperation between all partners, processes and locations, the sensitive manufacturing and development processes would soon become unhinged – and probably lead to snags in the design sector too.

To stave off any risk of interrupting the sensitive procedures in its internal and external product development processes, Webasto's designers have long relied on the product lifecycle management (PLM) solution CATIA – as do many other enterprises in the auto industry.

The sharpen its own IT profile, Webasto recently decided to collaborate even more closely with CENIT. As a consulting and software provider and Value Added Reseller (VAR) for Dassault Systèmes products, CENIT now acts as Webasto's direct point of contact for all matters related to PLM software solutions. This guarantees maximum flexibility and transparency for the licensing aspects of the 3D PLM solutions.

"The wide range of options available under CENIT's customer portal was particularly convincing", says Bernd Göllnitz, Webasto CIO: "Now, a check of our current installation base is just a mouse click away, whenever we like. It gives us an absolutely transparent grasp of our deployed license pool and of the invoicing for the annual license fees."

consulting."
This allows Webasto not just to cut costs, but also to focus on increasing service levels and improving quality by drawing on the special know-how of CENIT's experts. Having already benefited from CENIT's many years of IT and PLM expertise in earlier projects, Webasto knew what they were after.

"We didn't encounter a single instance of reduced service quality for end users."

Bernd Göllnitz
Director IT Technology & Operations, Webasto AG

► STARTING SITUATION

Responding to a convincing application management concept, Webasto simultaneously handed responsibility for managing the PLM infrastructure over to CENIT. "The core of our IT strategy is to let specialized providers handle issues that concern IT infrastructure and IT services," is how Bernd Göllnitz describes his company's approach. "Our prime goal is to concentrate our internal IT resources fully on application support and process

Prior to the joint introduction of application management structures with CENIT, the IT staff at Webasto AG were simply no longer able to cover the wide range of continually growing PLM responsibilities with their own resources. Many services thus had to be bought externally on an ad-hoc and often very short-term basis, leading to additional problems in cost planning.

► IMPLEMENTATION

CIO Bernd Göllnitz thus wanted to see quick changes towards best-possible cost planning: "To achieve maximum service

quality for our customers as well as planning security and cost transparency, while at the same time reducing the amount of effort we had to expend on coordinating with external service providers, we drew up a three-month, three-step transition phase," says the long-time Webasto manager. The goal was clear: to shift the entire CAD infrastructure as well as second level support for all CAD users around the world to a single external service provider.

CENIT acts as the central point of contact for all existing and future challenges in this field. This includes the provision of all required resources and the well-established, state-of-the art know-how needed to guarantee that the clearly defined service level agreements (SLAs) are attained at all times.

▶ STATUS AND OUTLOOK

During the first of the three introductory phases, CENIT's experts took a very close look at the situation on the ground. At the same time, Webasto staff was involved from the early stages in working out the process changes that would take place. "Presenting the issues to the technical departments in a comprehensible way, and communicating them to our customers clearly – these were key in dispersing misgivings", says Bernd Göllnitz in summarizing his experiences and the project's success.

In the next step, CENIT assumed PLM support while Webasto's role shifted to that of advisor. And since May 2008, CENIT has held sole responsibility for maintaining the SLAs within the sphere of the AIX-based CATIA infrastructure and for second level support covering 140 CAD users.

Despite the ambitious timeline, the transfer of operations went off without a hitch,

fully satisfying Webasto's expectations: "We didn't encounter a single instance of reduced service quality for end users, and we've only had positive feedback from our customers", says CIO Göllnitz.

The significant increases in productivity by Webasto's developers, achieved without a corresponding hike in costs, has already motivated the IT experts at Stockdorf for new exploits: "The next item on our agenda is to expand CENIT's involvement to include first level support," Göllnitz says expectantly.

"It's part of our IT strategy to let specialized providers handle issues that concern IT infrastructure and IT services."

Bernd Göllnitz
Director IT Technology & Operations, Webasto AG

CONTACT
CENIT
Industriestraße 52-54
70565 Stuttgart
Germany

Phone: +49 711 7825-30
Fax: +49 711 7825-4000
E-Mail: info@cenit.de
Web: www.cenit.de/plm

ABOUT WEBASTO:
Webasto AG, based in Stockdorf near Munich, is active at 50 international locations with over 6,500 employees. The company is one of the world's 100 largest auto industry suppliers. Core competencies include the development and manufacture of complete convertible, roof and body systems as well as heating, air conditioning and ventilation systems for passenger cars and commercial vehicles.