ALCAN ALUMINIUM VALAIS

USERS HAVE FUN PREPARING FOR SOFTWARE UPGRADE WITH SAP® ERP SIMULATION

"It's very important that our people can use SAP software in an enjoyable way, and SAP ERP Simulation helped present the software in that manner."

Sylvain Künzi,
Human Resources and Public Relations Director, Alcan Aluminium Valais S.A.

QUICK FACTS

Company
- Name: Alcan Aluminium Valais S.A.
- Headquarters: Sierre, Switzerland
- Industry: Mill products – fabricated metal products
- Products and services: Aluminum products for aerospace, automotive and transportation, packaging, and building markets
- Revenue: US$3.8 billion (Alcan Engineered Products)
- Employees: 10,000 (Alcan Engineered Products)
- Web site: www.alcan.com
- Implementation partner: SAP® Education organization

Challenges and Opportunities
- Overcome potential user resistance to an upgrade of the SAP ERP application
- Engender a collaborative approach across the company
- Improve data quality
- Realize faster time to value and ROI on SAP software

Objectives
Make training an exciting learning experience through a game-based approach

SAP Solutions and Services
- SAP ERP Simulation game by Baton Simulations
- Consulting services from SAP Education
- Training tools from SAP

Implementation Highlights
- Delivered simulation game in 3 weeks for the entire SAP software user community
- Came in on time and within budget
- Established key user group

Why SAP
- Alcan's previous success working with SAP Education
- The tool's quality and user-friendly nature

Benefits
- Prepared users of SAP software for upgrade
- Built team spirit across the company
- Helped users understand the importance of using SAP software effectively
- Helped users understand how everyone plays a role in end-to-end processes
- Highlighted importance of data quality
- Increased emphasis on user experience
- Increased user satisfaction and enthusiasm

Existing Environment
SAP enterprise software

Third-Party Integration
- Database: Oracle
- Hardware: IBM
- Operating system: IBM AIX

ALCAN

SAP®

Alcan Aluminium Valais S.A. specializes in aluminum extrusions, forcing hot metal through a die until it flows into the desired shape. But Alcan understands that people are not metal, so it took a new learning approach to getting its users "in shape" for an upgrade of the SAP® ERP application. Alcan worked with the SAP Education organization, which provided the SAP ERP Simulation game by Baton Simulations, to give people an engaging way to learn SAP ERP.

SAP Education ran the exercise for Alcan, which took only three weeks. Alcan divided 380 users into four-person teams; each team competed in 1 of 14 half-day sessions over the three-week period. An SAP Education instructor and coach presided over the learning exercise, where employees simulated basic business processes – managing production and sales and distribution – to see who could run the most profitable business.

"It's very important that our people can use SAP software in an enjoyable way, and SAP ERP Simulation helped present the software in that manner," says Sylvain Künzi, human resources and public relations director at Alcan. "I told our employees that they would have fun with SAP software. And they said they didn't believe it. And then we took pictures during the simulation, which showed our people how much fun they'd had."

Fun and games aside, Alcan accomplished its mission. It overcame user resistance and prepared employees for the upgrade. It built team spirit across the organization through random matching of users from disparate disciplines. Employees learned that SAP software is crucial to corporate performance, that everyone plays an indispensable role in the end-to-end processes, and that data quality is paramount. Alcan also used the game to launch a change management initiative, forming a key user group and emphasizing the user experience. The company recognizes that employee satisfaction and enthusiasm are key to effective operations – and to realizing a faster return on its investment in SAP ERP.

"We have made a substantial investment in IT assets," says Harry-Lionel Salamin, IT manager and IT business partner at Alcan. "Not having people use them correctly is like having a plane but no licensed pilot. You would not be able to fly."

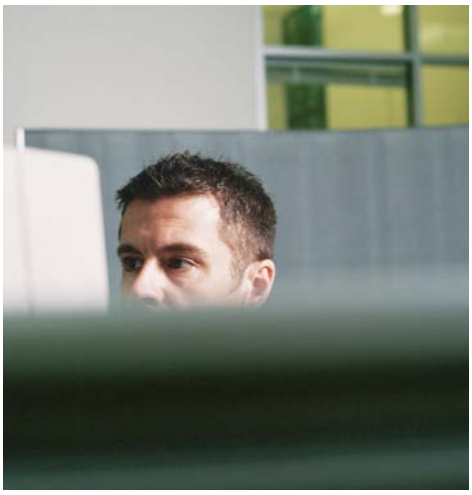
Training Impacts Data Quality

Sierre, Switzerland–based Alcan is part of Alcan Engineered Products, a global leader in developing and fabricating innovative, value-added aluminum products for markets such as aerospace, automotive and transportation, packaging, and building. At the Swiss facility, internal surveys indicated that training and documentation were big issues. "People were conducting transactions without knowing where the data was coming from and who would use the information afterward," Salamin says. "Users didn't take full responsibility for the data; we had some data quality issues."

Data quality has a major impact on operations. Alcan produces 100,000 tons of product a year and has to define master data for each item – the bills of materials, routings, and scheduling and cost standards. Says Salamin, "If you are not clear about schedules, production will not get materials when needed; this will delay fabrication and impact the customer. If you don't estimate costs correctly, you might charge too little or too much. Then, either the customer will take the order and we'll lose money, or it will not take the order and we'll lose the deal."

Alcan turned to SAP Education because of previous success working with the group. SAP Education listened to Alcan's concerns and recommended SAP ERP Simulation. "We were impressed by the quality of the tool," Künzi says. "It's very user-friendly."

Salamin gives equally high marks to the SAP Education organization's assistance during the engagement. "SAP Education got the project moving very quickly," he says. "We had a very good experience – the proposal was excellent, the consultants were professional, and everything came in on time and within budget. SAP Education ran the project quite well."



"SAP Education got the project moving very quickly. We had a very good experience – the proposal was excellent, the consultants were professional, and everything came in on time and within budget."

Harry-Lionel Salamin, IT Manager and IT Business Partner, Alcan Aluminium Valais S.A.

Game Teaches Integration and Collaboration

SAP ERP Simulation is based on a general business case for manufacturing and distributing products and uses a preconfigured SAP software landscape. The game is designed to increase user knowledge about SAP software's integrated processes and help different business areas understand the benefits of close collaboration. People learn about processes and process steps outside their own area. Team building is another key goal; having teams compete against one other increases the attractiveness of the exercise and encourages participants to constantly refine their team's business strategy.

The teams comprised users from across the company, from the CFO and other finance professionals through employees in sales, marketing, human resources, inventory, supply chain, production, and maintenance. "People from every part of the organization participated in the game," Künzi says.

Each team consisted of four people who were assigned randomly to play specific roles – heads of finance, production, inventory, and marketing – regardless of prior experience and job title. The participants executed transactions in SAP ERP and saw the business results immediately, which helped them learn to develop strategies to achieve their business objectives.

"Employees using the software on a daily basis have to be aware of the fact that their actions have an impact on other people's work," Künzi says. "With SAP ERP Simulation, they saw that without good communication and data quality – and a solid working knowledge of SAP ERP – they could not expect to make money."

Users All Made Money

During the game, Alcan users researched market prices, set and adapted pricing, and analyzed production costs. They planned marketing expenses, evaluated inventory, and executed production orders. They created sales forecasts, monitored production schedules, and conducted material requirements planning. They also converted purchase requisitions into purchase orders, tracked the orders, and reviewed financial results.

The goal of the exercise was to maximize profit. And it turned out that Alcan users knew how to take care of business. "Every team made money," Salamin says. "Some ran their businesses much better than others, but they all created a profitable operation."

Employees Are Now Eager for Training

Alcan next wants to install the SAP Productivity Pak application by ANCILE, which will allow it to generate its own training and documentation materials in a single step. All Alcan's content authors need to do is run a transaction – SAP Productivity Pak automatically records and documents each action, along with the associated screens, and produces the training materials and practice simulations. Alcan will then establish a context-sensitive support system for users and make training materials available for continuous learning and on-the-job improvement.

Alcan first used SAP ERP Simulation to preempt user resistance and explain the dynamics of SAP ERP. Now the company has plans to simulate advanced business strategy, like the financial implications of adding capacity. "This will involve people working together to increase efficiency," says Salamin. "The game will help us test strategy and share knowledge across the company by having people like the CFO and head of production get to know one another better and understand each other's jobs. We are going to reuse SAP ERP Simulation in many ways."

Alcan employees are eager for the challenge – and for more fun. "Our end users have become more open-minded and enthusiastic," Salamin says. "All the stakeholders are on board – managers, key users, end users – and they are waiting for us to deliver more education. I think this is the most important benefit of SAP ERP Simulation – our people are not in a resistance mode, but are eager for what is coming next."

www.sap.com/contactsap

50 104 787 (11/04)
©2011 SAP AG. All rights reserved.

SAP, R/3, SAP NetWeaver, Duet, PartnerEdge, ByDesign, SAP BusinessObjects Explorer, StreamWork, and other SAP products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of SAP AG in Germany and other countries.

Business Objects and the Business Objects logo, BusinessObjects, Crystal Reports, Crystal Decisions, Web Intelligence, Xcelsius, and other Business Objects products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Business Objects Software Ltd. Business Objects is an SAP company.

Sybase and Adaptive Server, iAnywhere, Sybase 365, SQL Anywhere, and other Sybase products and services mentioned herein as well as their respective logos are trademarks or registered trademarks of Sybase, Inc. Sybase is an SAP company.

All other product and service names mentioned are the trademarks of their respective companies. Data contained in this document serves informational purposes only. National product specifications may vary.

These materials are subject to change without notice. These materials are provided by SAP AG and its affiliated companies ("SAP Group") for informational purposes only, without representation or warranty of any kind, and SAP Group shall not be liable for errors or omissions with respect to the materials. The only warranties for SAP Group products and services are those that are set forth in the express warranty statements accompanying such products and services, if any. Nothing herein should be construed as constituting an additional warranty.