



VINZENZ GRUPPE

SPECIALLY DEVELOPED SOLUTION HELPS STREAMLINE COMMUNICATIONS

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: Vinzenz Gruppe Krankenhaus-beteiligungs- und Management GmbH
- Headquarters: Vienna, Austria
- Industry: Healthcare
- Products and services: Hospital management and operation
- Employees: 4,764
- Web site: www.vinzenzgruppe.at (German only)
- Implementation partner: SAP® Consulting

Challenges and Opportunities

- Enable faster, more efficient communication
- Improve security when processing sensitive patient data
- Provide doctors with accurate, up-to-date information on patients
- Improve collaboration between hospitals within the group
- Pave the way for a service-oriented architecture (SOA)

Objectives

- Implement flexible enterprise services as a basis for creating solutions in line with Vinzenz Gruppe's needs
- Design, develop, and implement a user-friendly solution

SAP® Solutions and Services

- SAP NetWeaver® Composition Environment offering
- SAP Consulting

Implementation Highlights

- Benefited from close contact with developers from SAP
- Designed, developed, and implemented the solution in less than a year

Why SAP

- Extensive SAP software-based landscape
- Support for flexible, future-proof SOA

Benefits

- Faster, better, more efficient exchange of documents
- Greater security for confidential patient data
- Improved collaboration between doctors based at different sites
- Better, more reliable service for patients
- Greater flexibility and more scope for future enhancements thanks to SOA

Existing Environment

SAP software, including the SAP ERP and SAP Patient Management applications, and third-party solutions, including i.s.h.med, a clinical workstation application for SAP for Healthcare solutions

Third-Party Integration

- Database: Oracle
- Hardware: Hewlett-Packard
- Operating system: Windows NT

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Christian Gierlinger, Head of IT Strategy and Development, Vinzenz Gruppe Krankenhaus-beteiligungs- und Management GmbH



VINZENZ GRUPPE | ^{AG} AG

Medical professionals need to exchange information relating to the diagnosis of patients quickly, simply, and securely. Austria-based healthcare provider Vinzenz Gruppe Krankenhausbeteiligungs- und Management GmbH wanted to streamline collaboration between doctors based at different sites and improve transparency across the entire treatment process. And because the company already had an extensive IT environment based on SAP® software, it turned to SAP Consulting for help. By implementing a service-oriented architecture (SOA), experts from SAP designed, developed, and built a state-of-the-art solution – helping ensure doctors have access to the facts and figures they need to make vital decisions.

Headquartered in Vienna, Vinzenz Gruppe is one of Austria's leading private healthcare providers and is responsible for the operation and management of seven hospitals across the country. The organization was founded in 1994 – although the hospitals themselves were established much earlier. Vinzenz Gruppe, which currently employs a workforce of over 4,700, is devoted to providing high-quality professional medical care to its patients.

Time for a Change

Vinzenz Gruppe is constantly looking to improve and streamline its business processes – so it can offer the best possible service to patients and make life easier for its employees. To this end, the organization deploys a range of powerful software and has an IT

landscape based, to a large extent, on SAP functionality. What's more, decision makers are keen to adopt new technologies and innovations that will help take the business forward.

So when the company was faced with new challenges, it wanted to find cutting-edge solutions – in line with its specific requirements. For example, Vinzenz Gruppe operates a specialist radio-oncology department at its facility in Linz. And the group needed a convenient way of sharing this unit's expertise with physicians at other sites – without doctors and patients having to travel there. "We needed to enhance communications between cancer specialists based at different locations and enable them to exchange information about patients more efficiently and securely," explains Stefan Rausch-Schott, head of the competence center for system engi-

neering at Vinzenz Gruppe. "In the past, documents were sent via fax or e-mail. But this was time-consuming and not 100% reliable. Patient data is highly sensitive, and a simple mistake when keying in a fax number could result in confidential material falling into the wrong hands." Furthermore, new legislation set to come into force in the near future will prevent doctors in Austria from faxing their findings and referrals to colleagues. In short, it was time for Vinzenz Gruppe to find an alternative way of working.

A Fit-for-the-Future Solution

To fulfill future requirements and support the group going forward, senior management opted to implement a flexible SOA. SOA enables companies to develop service-based applications in line with their specific needs – stream-



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lining business processes and increasing agility and responsiveness. With the help of the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform, organizations can start small and introduce new services as and when they need to – avoiding the effort and expense of a big-bang implementation. What’s more, SOA can be implemented without major changes to a company’s existing IT environment and with minimal business disruption. This is very important for healthcare providers, as patient data stored in core systems needs to be available 24x7.

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To help find an answer to its challenge, Vinzenz Gruppe chose to team up with SAP Consulting. “We were impressed with the knowledge and experience of the experts at SAP Consulting and found them to be the best for the job,” explains Christian Gierlinger, head of IT strategy and development. “Moreover, we wanted to ensure the new solution could be tightly integrated into our existing SAP environment. A service-based IT landscape is one of our long-term goals. Investing in SOA is investing in the future.”

Off to a Good Start

IT experts at Vinzenz Gruppe sat down with specialists from SAP Consulting to define the company’s requirements and work out how best to fulfill them. They decided to leverage a mixture of standard and custom-developed enterprise services to design and build a solution. “Our medical professionals had to be able to call up data stored in multiple applications across the enterprise – via one centralized tool,” explains Rausch-Schott. “What’s more, the solution needed to be reliable, user-friendly, fast, and secure.”

An enterprise service is typically a series of Web services combined with business logic that can be accessed and used repeatedly to support changing business processes. “As this was completely new ground for us, we opted to run a pilot project to connect two of our hospitals,” adds Gierlinger. “That way we could be sure the solution was right for us before hooking up the other sites or making data available to external stakeholders, such as family physicians who are not part of the group. And thanks to excellent collaboration between our team and SAP developers in Walldorf, the initiative kicked off very quickly.”

A Helping Hand

To help ensure the new solution was tailored perfectly to Vinzenz Gruppe’s needs, developers deployed the SAP NetWeaver Composition Environment

(SAP NetWeaver CE) offering. This is a lean, standards-based solution enabling development of applications based on enterprise services. SAP NetWeaver CE helped Vinzenz Gruppe access data stored in multiple systems as enterprise services. This enabled the rapid creation of new applications based on functionality from existing SAP and third-party solutions. By leveraging SAP NetWeaver CE, professionals from SAP Consulting were able to create a set of enterprise services to meet Vinzenz Gruppe’s specific requirements. What’s more, they completed the ambitious undertaking in less than a year.

Faster, More Secure Collaboration

The pilot project at two hospitals was a resounding success. And the tool is already making a real difference in the way medical professionals at Vinzenz Gruppe work. It provides a single, integrated view of all documents relating to a particular patient – helping ensure each member of staff has access to the same information. This eliminates the need for time-consuming telephone calls and e-mails to request missing details.

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What's more, the solution has significantly increased the security of sensitive patient information. "We no longer send medical records via fax or post. So we don't need to worry about breaking data protection laws," explains Gierlinger. "In addition, staff can only call up information for as long as a patient is in their care." Thanks to sophisticated authorization functionality, doctors' access rights are automatically revoked once the patient's treatment is completed.

The solution also helps enable doctors to better coordinate treatment between hospitals. "Vinzenz Gruppe aims to provide the best medical care possible," explains Rausch-Schott. "The new solution makes life easier for our staff and benefits our patients too."

Ultimately, the solution is expected to bring cost savings for Vinzenz Gruppe. "Thanks to SOA and SAP Consulting, we've been able to pare back the number of communications channels and cut down paper-based processes. This will mean a reduction in administrative overhead," remarks Rausch-Schott.

Just the Beginning

The next step is to roll out the solution to the group's remaining five hospitals – improving doctors' work and patient care across the entire organization. But Vinzenz Gruppe is not stopping there. "We plan to add new services and enhance functionality in two further phases," explains Gierlinger. "We're keen to exploit SOA even further to extend solution access to external healthcare professionals and patients." What's more, decision makers at Vinzenz Gruppe intend to leverage the new-look IT architecture to create innovative, agile solutions to other challenges too.

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