



## RHEINISCHE POST VERLAGSGESELLSCHAFT

### SAP® SOFTWARE HELPS PUBLISHER INCREASE ADVERTISING SALES

#### QUICK FACTS

“In the future, our advertising sales representatives will use a centrally stored sales summary. This will enable them to prepare for pitches in a matter of minutes.”

**Kurt Pfeiffer**, Head of Organization and Methods,  
Rheinisch-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH

#### Company

- Name: Rheinische Post Verlagsgesellschaft mbH
- Location: Düsseldorf, Germany
- Industry: Media
- Products and services: Newspapers, online publishing, free publications, radio, television
- Circulation: Approximately 400,000
- Employees: 600
- Web site: [www.rp-online.de](http://www.rp-online.de)
- Implementation partners: circ IT GmbH, SAP® Consulting

#### Challenges and Opportunities

- Centralize information for decentralized sales teams
- Provide teams with easy access to all available customer information
- Access customer information when identifying new target groups and developing new products

#### Objectives

- Create central storage for all customer information collected by multiple teams
- Provide 360-degree view of customer history, preferences, and opinions
- Integrate and synchronize work of external sales agents and internal advertising sales department
- Replace paper-based processes
- Integrate core processes in customer operations management with existing SAP software

#### SAP Solutions and Services

- SAP Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM) application
- SAP NetWeaver® Business Intelligence (SAP NetWeaver BI) component

#### Implementation Highlights

- Connected SAP CRM with the SAP ERP application, the SAP for Media solution portfolio, and SAP NetWeaver BI
- Integrated existing advertising marketing system
- Integrated marketing database

#### Why SAP

- Easy to integrate
- Future-proof solution
- Clear costs thanks to fixed price

#### Benefits

- Better customer service
- High degree of data transparency
- Central management of master data, activities, and campaigns
- Elimination of most integration gaps
- Less but more effective customer contact
- Improved analysis options
- Substantially less preparation time for customer meetings
- Centralized access to sales summaries

#### Existing Environment

- SAP ERP, SAP for Media, SAP NetWeaver BI, SAP NetWeaver Portal component

**RHEINISCHE POST**

## Sixty Years of Media Culture

The first edition of *Rheinische Post* appeared on March 2, 1946. It consisted of four pages and cost a very modest 20 pfennig. Since its launch, a lot has changed at what is now Germany's second largest regional subscription newspaper. The Düsseldorf, Germany-based publisher has transformed into a modern media company, selling 400,000 copies of its 31 regional

cross-media advertising. Newspaper publishers achieve the majority of their revenues by selling advertising. Media sales at *Rheinische Post* are heavily decentralized, as is standard in the industry.

Independent sales agents are responsible for the customers in their distribution zone and sell cross-media advertising for both the printed and Internet versions of *Rheinische Post*. The internal

irrelevant. (Does the managing director of a particular advertising customer play tennis or soccer? Did the chairman of the board of another major client praise the *Rheinische Post* online offer in passing?) "This information was previously not available to help us put together target groups or to develop new products," explains Dr. Christiane Braun, project lead for customer relationship management at Rheinisch-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH.

"We deliberately chose a solution with a cost that could be clearly calculated."

Kurt Pfeiffer, Head of Organization and Methods, Rheinisch-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH

editions every day in the federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalen to almost 1.2 million readers. *Rheinische Post* Verlagsgesellschaft mbH has also achieved success abroad in the Czech Republic, Poland, and the Netherlands. However, to continue operating and growing profitably, the publisher needed to coordinate its decentralized sales groups, internally and externally, and give them fast access to a consistent and very large amount of customer data. With the SAP® Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM) application, it found the software that could make it possible.

### Customer Information Stored on Paper

Winning as many readers as possible and keeping them up-to-date with current affairs is just one side of running a newspaper company. The other consists of successfully marketing

advertising sales department focuses on the classified markets and inter-regional commercial customers. Both sales groups kept their customer-related information on paper. A complete overview of advertising customers required considerable time and was not always possible.

### Customer Information Hidden in Many Sources

To be successful, advertising sales personnel require quick access to a large amount of customer information: When and by whom was the customer last contacted? In which special inserts or campaigns has the customer recently advertised? To answer these sorts of questions, the employees at *Rheinische Post* had to painstakingly search through diverse storage systems. Furthermore, information that might have been helpful was not recorded anywhere because someone assumed it was

## Paper-Based Processes Replaced

The publisher decided to solve this problem by introducing an IT-based customer relationship management (CRM) solution. Because the existing IT environment could not adequately meet the company's detailed requirements, *Rheinische Post* began evaluating the functionality of various CRM solutions. The selection process was led by the company's advertising department and enterprise organization. It soon became clear that SAP offered the best complete package.

*Rheinische Post* has been working with SAP solutions since 1989. Today, the company uses the SAP ERP application, the SAP for Media solution portfolio, the SAP NetWeaver® Portal component, and the SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence (SAP NetWeaver BI) component to analyze data. "For integration reasons, it made sense to choose an SAP customer relationship management solution. The SAP solution was also very convincing," explains Kurt Pfeiffer, head of organization and methods at Rheinisch-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft.



“We want to understand our customers so that we can create better offers for them. As a result of the CRM project, our attention is even more focused on our customers’ needs and requirements.”

**Dr. Christiane Braun**, Project Lead for Customer Relationship Management,  
Rheinisch-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft mbH

Rheinische Post had previously handled many of its advertisement-relevant processes using different process steps and systems that were not integrated. With SAP CRM, the paper-based processes could be developed into electronic processes – rendering integration gaps a thing of the past.

### Fixed-Price Solution Chosen

The first customer from the media industry to implement the predefined marketing functionality in SAP CRM, Rheinische Post concentrated on the

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support provided for two business processes – campaign management for advertisements and advertising consulting services. “We deliberately chose a solution with a cost that could be clearly calculated. These processes also handle special publications and market cultivation very well,” explains Pfeiffer.

The implementation by SAP Consulting was delivered with a fixed price for services. Rheinische Post received additional support from its internal IT partner, circ IT GmbH. “All the teams cooperated very well. This ensured the implementation was a success,” explains Pfeiffer.

### All Details Planned from the Start

The design phase started in July 2006. Workshops were held to specify what system adaptations were necessary and to review the business processes that would be undergoing change. A training course for those working on the project followed. The technical implementation began in January 2007.

The project benefited from the software’s predefined basic configuration. “We could quickly implement the Rheinische Post’s CRM system

requirements,” says Thorsten Witzek, project lead at SAP Consulting. The project leads decided to go live with the implementation in August 2007.

### Access to Customer Data Centralized

Rheinische Post centralized access to its data, thereby creating greater transparency. “That was a question of give and take. In certain areas, our sales agents had to transfer their knowledge. On the other hand, they now have instruments that make sales easier. It is easier for them to prepare for a customer meeting, thanks to the centralized access to sales summaries,” explains Braun.

The transformation has proved invaluable. Sales agents used to require a half-hour to prepare for customer meetings. Now they need just a few minutes to establish a commercial advertiser’s advertising and payment history, subscription status, and past contact with various departments of the newspaper. They can also perform follow-up activities more easily.

“We link the information from the commercial advertising system to the data from sales and reader markets. Previously, the data had to be entered in the respective departments’ various systems and lists and reconciled. By documenting and planning customer contact, we avoid situations where a customer is called by different areas at the same time, and we can provide the information much faster internally,” explains Braun. The new solution means that the customer is contacted less frequently, but the quality of that contact increases – and with it the chance of a successful sale.

### Valuable Training for New Thinking

The new solution requires a new way of thinking for those who work with the changed business processes. Around 200 employees from the advertising area and sales force were scheduled first for training, with sales and the reader markets department slated for training afterward. However, the employees are taught more than just how to use the technical application. “It is important that everyone involved understands the philosophy behind the concept,”

stresses Braun. "We need to concentrate more on our customers. Using the available information, it is easier to create tailor-made offers."

The result is called "customer development planning," with existing customers to be addressed differently from potential customers, for example. "We want to understand our customers so that we can create better offers for them. As a result of the CRM project, our attention is even more focused on our customers' needs and requirements," says Braun.

The concept was well received by the employees and sales agents at Rheinische Post, with 20% expressing an interest in being included in a pilot group. "The sales agents, too, now recognize that they benefit from the IT-supported processes," says Pfeiffer.

With the implementation of the SAP solution, a single customer contact can now generate more business. As a result Rheinische Post hopes this will lead to an increase in market share and increased revenues. Even cross-selling offers from the print and online, TV, and radio areas are easier to realize, a point of particular importance in light of the fact that traditional advertising revenues are faltering. As Pfeiffer explains, "With the implementation of SAP CRM marketing, Rheinische Post has laid important foundations. We want to build on these in the next few years to complete more CRM projects."



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