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Al Batha: Transforming User Experience into Better Business Performance with SAP® Enterprise Support

albatha

Company
Al Batha Group

Headquarters
Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Industry, products, and services
Group of independent companies in industries such as automotive, life sciences, high tech, consumer products, and higher education and research

Web site
www.albathagroup.com

SAP® solutions
SAP® E-Recruiting application, SAP Enterprise Support services

Partner
SAP Active Global Support organization

It begins by listening

How do you turn a small beginning into a national phenomenon? You listen. It's a strategy that's transformed Al Batha Group into one of the largest private groups in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Its success is built on the experience of its workforce, recognizing that those on the front lines know how best to run the business. Today, Al Batha is listening to 5,500 company employees and finding more ways to perform even better.

Al Batha's 28 member companies compete in multiple industry segments including automotive, pharmaceuticals, fast-moving consumer goods, real estate, and education. But regardless of the industry they work in, Al Batha's people all share a single mission: to improve the quality of life of their customers and their community. "Providing employees with the very best productivity tools is an important part of that mission," explains Saji Oommen, group director of IT at Al Batha. "It's why we run SAP software."

Al Batha needed more input from business users in the design and workflow of user interfaces in enterprise SAP® software. That's why Al Batha is engaged with SAP Enterprise Support services in a unique and collaborative process to improve the user experience. "We started with recruitment and have already significantly reduced cycle times and costs," explains Oommen. It's concrete proof of how a business can thrive if it just listens.

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Creating a great first impression

Openness to change is a core value at Al Batha; the entire workforce is encouraged to challenge existing practices and processes on a daily basis. "We feel strongly that our greatest opportunities for improvement depend on input from our employees," says Oommen. "They know the areas that need improvement; and by listening, we can all work together to innovate and improve our bottom line."

For Al Batha's HR specialists, recruitment was a key area that presented opportunities for improvement. Al Batha was running an older version of the SAP E-Recruiting application. "The Web interfaces weren't customized," says Oommen. "And we were getting negative feedback regarding the complexity and usability of our e-recruiting solution." This included a lot of unnecessary fields that applicants had to complete and data that HR staff didn't need.

The online process was unnecessarily lengthy and unclear. "Completing an application required too many steps," explains Oommen. "Many applicants could only see a few of those steps because screen-to-screen navigation was not clear." And because many applicants were not completing all of the screens, the HR team was receiving a lot of incomplete applications. Explains Oommen, "Each application not only required more data and processing time by our HR users, but the whole user experience and processing delays also left our applicants with a negative impression that we urgently needed to correct."

> "We need to tailor the functionality of SAP E-Recruiting to create a faster, more intuitive experience for applicants and HR users. HR can spend less time and money on each application, and applicants are much happier with the process and with Al Batha."
>
> Saji Oommen, Group Director for Information Technology, Al Batha Group

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Partnership and co-innovation driven by business users

The usability issues reported by the HR team and the applicants provided an ideal opportunity to partner with SAP through SAP Enterprise Support services. "We are developing a new implementation approach, with the SAP Enterprise Support Advisory Council, that we call user experience–driven productivity optimization (UxPO)," explains Oommen. "The ultimate goal is to improve the productivity and the satisfaction of our users."

In order to provide its business users with the best possible user experience when working with SAP software, Al Batha needed to upgrade to the latest version of SAP E-Recruiting. "By upgrading, we could fully customize user interfaces quickly and sustainably," says Oommen.

Oommen and his team could take advantage of the Web Dynpro development environment in the latest version of the application, which they can use to rapidly adapt and deploy the user interfaces. "It's very standardized and intuitive," says Oommen. "So we can quickly eliminate all of the unnecessary entry fields and reduce the number of screens applicants must scroll through quickly and efficiently."

> "With the user-centric approach we are taking with the SAP Enterprise Support Advisory Council and our upgraded development environment, we completed customization of the SAP E-Recruiting user interfaces in just two weeks."
>
> Saji Oommen, Group Director for Information Technology, Al Batha Group

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A solution designed by business users – for business users

The new user-centric UxPO approach has proven pivotal to the successful deployment of the upgraded SAP E-Recruiting interfaces. The approach employed three phases that began with the discovery of issues from business users themselves – including HR team members. In the next phase, Al Batha worked with experts from the SAP Active Global Support (SAP AGS) organization to analyze the user issues and then evaluate and choose the right solution.

In the final phase, Al Batha deployed the solution: a simpler and faster online application experience delivered by an upgraded, more powerful version of SAP E-Recruiting. "The HR users told us a lot during usability testing," says Oommen. "They identified specific entry fields that were unnecessary and types of data that were either incorrect or unclear, such as job category selections."

In addition to stripping out the unnecessary fields, the project team made the button and field headers, as well as the navigation queues, much clearer. Oommen also credits the people at SAP AGS. "SAP Enterprise Support provided the expertise we needed to ensure success," he says. "We received the knowledge transfer we needed to expand the UxPO approach across other business processes."

"There are fewer entry fields and screens. The application process we are replacing required eight steps to complete; now applicants can do it in five."

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Easier for applicants, simplified recruiting for HR

After getting positive reviews from the HR team, Al Batha is deploying the improved functionality to its external e-recruiting site. Users are reporting that the new application process is a vast improvement. "They feel more empowered because they can process more applications on their own without the delays caused by incomplete information coming in," says Oommen. "The interfaces are easier to use and require less training than the earlier version, and we are getting much better usage out of the system."

The upgraded application is also reducing IT administration time and effort. "We can design and deploy user interfaces much faster. We not only cleaned up the user screens, but we also cleaned up the master data," says Oommen. "By doing things like reducing and mapping job categories to specific roles at Al Batha, we made our data model simpler and more sustainable over time."

With the deployment completed, Al Batha is confident that it will no longer lose potential new hires because of a poor application experience. "Our brand and our image are on the line when great candidates have a less than satisfactory experience applying for jobs at Al Batha," explains Oommen. "We expect that potential new hires will be able to complete their application much faster, and that our HR department can process them faster because more applications will be completed correctly the first time."

20%

Reduction in recruitment cycle time

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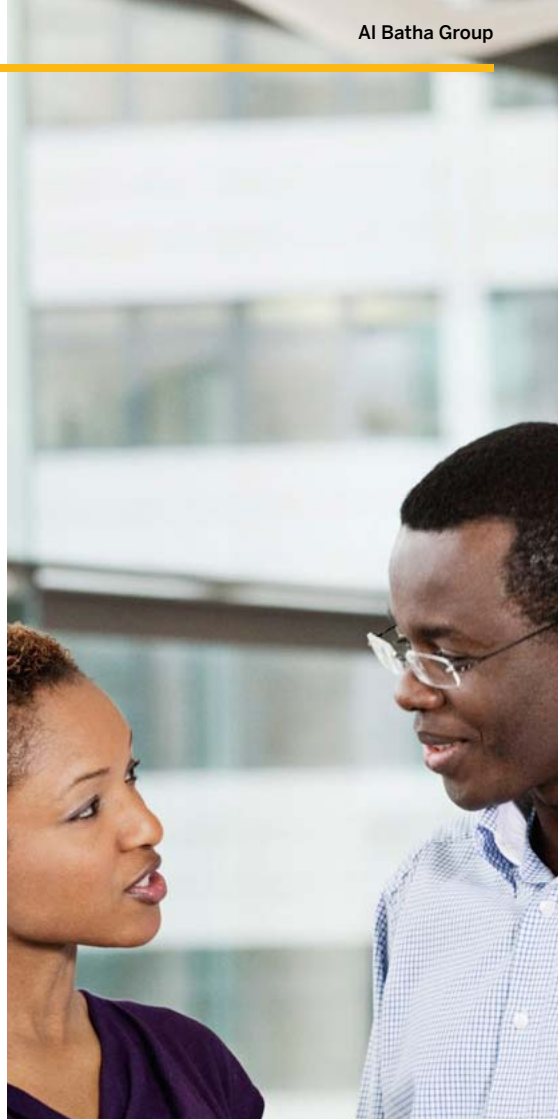
The lessons learned from listening

The UxPO approach codeveloped with SAP Enterprise Support Advisory Council has proven to be an important tool for enhancing the usability of Al Batha's enterprise software and, as a result, enhancing the productivity of its people. "We have now demonstrated that by engaged listening with our users, we were able to shrink recruiting times and cost while improving our corporate image to our applicants," says Oommen.

Al Batha plans to further leverage the UxPO approach to identify and address other areas where usability can be improved. "If we can incorporate the experience of our business users in a very systematic and deliberate way to improve the usability of our deployed technology," concludes Oommen, "then there's really no limit as to how much we can improve and grow our business."



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