



GROUPE DANONE

AVOIDING BUSINESS DISRUPTION WITH SAP® MAXATTENTION™

QUICK FACTS

“SAP MaxAttention enabled us to complete our challenging upgrades on schedule, within budget – and without impacting day-to-day business.”

Jean-Michel Egu, Business Solution Director, Groupe Danone

Company

- Name: Groupe Danone
- Headquarters: Paris
- Industry: Consumer products
- Products and services: Fresh dairy products, bottled waters, baby and medical nutrition
- Revenue: €15.2 billion
- Employees: 80,143
- Web site: www.danone.com
- Implementation partner: Accenture

Challenges and Opportunities

- Lay the foundation for new business functionality by moving to the latest releases of core SAP® solutions
- Upgrade business-critical software at multiple locations around the globe
- Perform Unicode conversion

Objectives

- Keep business downtime to a minimum
- Mitigate the risk of a highly complex, global project
- Accelerate Unicode conversion process

SAP Solutions and Services

- SAP MaxAttention™ support option
- SAP Enterprise Support services
- SAP Active Global Support (SAP AGS) organization
- SAP Consulting
- SAP Supply Chain Management (SAP SCM) application
- SAP ERP application

Implementation Highlights

- Outstanding collaboration between Groupe Danone's project team, SAP AGS, and all other stakeholders
- Dedicated technical quality manager as single point of contact to SAP AGS
- Exceptionally smooth upgrade with no disruption to day-to-day business

Why SAP

- Positive experience with SAP MaxAttention for ongoing operations
- Rapid access to unparalleled support expertise

Benefits

- All project milestones achieved on schedule and within budget
- Extremely rapid Unicode conversion
- 41% less disk space required for database (for SAP ERP)
- 75% less hardware needed for SAP SCM
- 40% fewer custom programs
- Firm technical foundation for implementing new SAP business functionality
- Support from SAP MaxAttention for drawing up IT strategy

Existing Environment

- SAP software for enterprise resource planning
- SAP Advanced Planning & Optimization component

Third-Party Integration

- Database: IBM DB2
- Hardware: IBM
- Operating system: IBM AIX



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When Groupe Danone upgraded its core SAP® software, the consumer products giant had to keep to a very tight schedule. That's where the SAP Active Global Support (SAP AGS) organization came in. Thanks to a winning combination of SAP Enterprise Support services and the SAP MaxAttention™ support option, Groupe Danone successfully completed the complex global initiative on time, within budget – and with no disruption to ongoing business.

Headquartered in Paris, France, Groupe Danone is a world leader in fresh dairy products and bottled waters – and a major international player in baby and medical nutrition. Its brands include well-known names such as Evian and Blédina. The group is firmly committed to innovation and invests heavily in R & D. In recent years, Groupe Danone's business strategy has fueled strong growth. With a workforce of over 80,100 at business units around the globe, the group posted revenues of €15.2 billion in 2008.

Shifting SAP Software up a Gear

Innovative software plays a key role in Groupe Danone's business success. Since introducing SAP software in 1999, the group has steadily expanded its use of SAP software. "We started with the classic functionality and built out from there," says Jean-Michel Egu, business solution director at Groupe Danone. "We're now very much an SAP shop. Almost 10,000 employees worldwide use SAP solutions in their daily work."

As part of a strategic program to extend the technical and functional scope of its SAP software landscape, Groupe Danone recently moved up to the latest

releases of the SAP ERP and SAP Supply Chain Management (SAP SCM) applications. As Egu explains, this offered considerable opportunities: "Upgrading our SAP solutions will enable us to introduce new functionality for key business tasks." In addition, the new releases open the door to new, business-driven IT approaches such as service-oriented architecture (SOA).

Ambitious Scope – Tight Timelines

The sheer scale of the undertaking posed daunting challenges. Groupe Danone had to upgrade three instances of the SAP Advanced Planning & Optimization component to SAP SCM – and transition seven production systems at locations around the globe to SAP ERP. What's more, the SAP ERP upgrades included Unicode conversions.

A big-bang approach was out of the question, so Groupe Danone decided to perform the individual upgrades at two- to four-week intervals. "To avoid disruption to day-to-day business, we had to complete each changeover to SAP ERP within a 72-hour window," says Ralf Steinbach, development and

integration director at Groupe Danone. "The Unicode conversions, which involved completely reinstalling sizable databases, posed particularly thorny problems when it came to meeting our deadlines."

Expert Support from SAP MaxAttention

To help clear these hurdles, Groupe Danone leveraged a combination of SAP Enterprise Support and SAP MaxAttention, a comprehensive support option delivered by SAP AGS. SAP MaxAttention provides tailored advice and assistance across the entire lifecycle of an application – from planning and implementation to operation, optimization, and upgrade.

"Before embarking on this project, we were already using SAP MaxAttention to maintain our SAP software and were very happy with the results," states Steinbach. "For the upgrades, we needed unparalleled solution skills plus experienced specialists who could help us ensure the initiative went without a hitch."

Laying the Foundations for Success

Prior to Groupe Danone's engagement of SAP MaxAttention, SAP AGS delivered downtime and upgrade assessments, laying a solid foundation for subsequent activities. "Within the scope of SAP Enterprise Support, specialists from SAP AGS performed assessments to show that we could complete the changeover in the available time. And



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Next up was a kickoff meeting with all project stakeholders. In addition to SAP AGS, these included Groupe Danone’s in-house IT team, SAP Consulting, hosting provider IBM, and implementation partner Accenture. Egu underscores the importance of close collaboration during the initiative: “Everyone’s roles and responsibilities were clearly defined, so there were no misunderstandings or duplicate effort. We all worked together as a single, close-knit team.”

Working Hand in Hand to Master Challenges

When it came to the potentially critical Unicode part, SAP AGS specialists sat down with IBM to find ways of accelerating the conversion by reducing database size. And throughout the deployment of SAP MaxAttention, experienced

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professionals from SAP were on hand to give Groupe Danone fast, effective support, as required.

Groupe Danone also enjoyed expert advice and assistance from SAP Services in the form of workshops outlining new functionality and demonstrating the opportunities offered by the latest software releases. Regular meetings

between Groupe Danone’s project team and the steering committee helped ensure the upgrades stayed on track.

All Upgrades on Schedule and Within Budget

Ultimately, the combination of painstaking preparation and close teamwork paid off. “SAP MaxAttention enabled us to complete our challenging upgrades on schedule, within budget – and without impacting day-to-day business,” states Egu. The experts from SAP AGS were able to accelerate the associated tasks in a number of ways. For example, drawing on experience gained during the initial upgrades, they reduced the number of rehearsals for going live from three to just one, speeding up the process considerably.

Thanks to the concerted efforts of SAP AGS and IBM, Groupe Danone was able to complete the Unicode conversion well within the defined time frame.

Better yet, the specialists decreased the amount of costly hardware required. “When introducing Unicode, you usually expect disk usage to increase by 30% to 50%,” explains Steinbach. “By leveraging the compression features of our DB2 database, SAP AGS and IBM actually reduced the disk space needed.” In addition to a 41% reduction in the size of the database for SAP ERP, the

SAP AGS specialists helped Groupe Danone cut down the hardware required for SAP SCM by 75% – and slashed the number of custom programs by 40%.

Rapid Access to the Right Expertise

Egu takes stock of the benefits for Groupe Danone: “With SAP MaxAttention, we gained the peace of mind that comes from knowing we could get effective advice and assistance – fast. As a result, we were able to deliver on all our promises.” This was due in no small measure to the dedicated technical quality manager. “Our technical quality manager from SAP AGS is a real asset,” continues Egu. “He’s a full-fledged member of our team and our single point of contact to a wealth of expertise. If we have a query or a problem, he immediately puts us onto the right person for our needs.”

With its new releases in place, Groupe Danone is now forging ahead with its strategic IT program. During the course of 2009, a road map will be defined for introducing new SAP solutions and business functionality. The group has already launched a proof of concept for the SAP Extended Warehouse Management (SAP EWM) application and is currently looking into the business benefits of the SAP Customer Relationship Management application and the SAP NetWeaver® Business Warehouse component. What’s more, Groupe Danone’s IT specialists are now tapping into the functionality of the SAP Solution Manager application management solution to improve their in-house processes – particularly in the areas of software testing and monitoring.

A True Strategic Partner

Going forward, SAP MaxAttention will continue to deliver expert support for the group. At the moment, SAP AGS is running on-site workshops to provide insight into SAP EWM and how it can benefit Groupe Danone's business. "SAP MaxAttention has proved extremely flexible," says Egu. "Initially, we used the support option to maintain our older releases. Then we deployed it to safeguard our complex upgrades. And now we are leveraging our close ties to SAP AGS to gauge the business value of new functionality. The engagement has developed into a real strategic relationship."

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