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Abantia: The Power of SAP® Mobile Solutions to Enable On-the-Go Service Technicians

Partner

Company
Abantia

Headquarters
Barcelona, Spain

Industry, products, and services
Engineering, construction, and operations

Web site
www.abantia.com

SAP® solutions
SAP® Mobile Platform, SAP Afaria® mobile device management solution, custom field service mobile app, SAP ERP and SAP Supplier Relationship Management applications, and SAP ERP Human Capital Management solution

Partner
Seidor
www.seidor.es

Using mobile technology to serve customers better

Outside Barcelona, a service technician takes a break in his van by reading *El País* on a Samsung Galaxy tablet. Suddenly, the device emits a ping, alerting him to a new work order. He opens a mobile app, reads the assignment, confirms the repair part in his inventory, then maps the best route to the customer. By placing access to back-end systems in the hands of mobile technicians, Abantia **improved business process efficiencies and reduced costs.**

This is how business is done today at Abantia, an international group focused on applied engineering installations, assembly, maintenance, and energy – thanks to SAP® Mobile Platform and related SAP solutions. But back in 2011 processes were much less efficient. Technicians had to drive to headquarters to receive assignments. Sometimes they were late to service calls because dispatch gave them the wrong address. While inspecting machinery, technicians often discovered necessary parts missing from their inventory. They'd have to drive back to the warehouse for the part but also stop at the petrol station to refuel. When the job was finally completed, there was no means of capturing the customer's signature to validate the work. An invoice would be mailed to the customer 15 days later, and the work could be disputed, resulting in a delay in receiving payment. All of these inefficiencies hindered the technician's performance, frustrated customers, and created a poor image of Abantia.

Read more

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Desire to grow business motivates change in business processes

Abantia was in need of a workforce automation solution to support all of its technicians in the field. The company required an end-to-end solution that could modernize and integrate all business processes and bridge the gap between the mobile workforce and the back office. From the moment they receive a work order down to invoicing a customer, technicians require seamless integration of all business processes to maximize their efficiency and meet customer expectations for service. Abantia also needed the solution to scale with the increased complexity and evolving technical requirements of its growing international business. Rising competition and a desire to grow the business motivated Abantia to make changes to its business processes and find a mobile solution to fit its needs. "How can we make our back-end systems accessible to our mobile technicians to make our entire business more efficient?" said Josep Fabregas, CIO of Abantia.

2,100 work orders

Issued each month

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Meeting business needs with an end-to-end mobile solution

Abantia selected the SAP ERP and SAP Supplier Relationship Management (SAP SRM) applications to run its sales and purchasing but still needed to integrate all of its business solutions into a mobile app to put in the hands of the technicians to reduce process inefficiencies. The deployment of SAP ERP and SAP SRM had proven a positive experience for Abantia. But at the time, when it came to enterprise mobility, SAP did not have a solution to meet the company's needs. The Abantia team looked into many options without finding the right match. But with SAP's acquisition of Sybase, it became clear that SAP was committed to the enterprise mobility market and was the right choice to meet the growing requirements of Abantia's business. Abantia turned to longtime partner Seidor for help.

"We had a need, and Seidor had the SAP technology and know-how to put it all together."

Josep Fabregas, CIO, Abantia

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Providing low-cost investment with high added value

Abantia selected SAP gold partner Seidor to manage the implementation, based on its extensive industry experience and knowledge of SAP software and mobile projects. Headquartered in Barcelona, with offices around Europe and Latin America, Seidor was already developing applications in SAP Mobile Platform.

Seidor improved Abantia's business processes by implementing a custom-developed app, CSMobile, built on SAP Mobile Platform, which enabled the customer service functionality of the SAP ERP application. Back at headquarters, managers can now automatically generate an incident notice, delegate and notify technicians of order assignments, and deliver a note generated in SAP ERP to mobile devices. The field service technician can immediately receive the assigned notification, access stock in the warehouse and in their vehicles, create incident reports for the job they performed, and even close out incidents from their mobile devices. Abantia selected the Samsung Galaxy tablet to run CSMobile in combination with Google Navigator for geolocalization and integration with their contact center management capabilities in SAP ERP. Seidor also deployed the SAP Afaria® mobile device management solution for added security and functionality, also enabling Abantia's technicians to work offline.

Abantia initially began using the new mobile solution with 10 field technicians. The company soon increased this number to 20, and plans to roll it out to the worldwide field force in 2013. Seidor implemented the customer service functionality in SAP ERP over the course of two months. Once deployed, CSMobile took only two additional months to implement. This seamless integration provided a low-cost investment with a high added value.

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Minimizing inefficiencies and cost overruns

Seidor gave Abantia full access to the customer service functionality in SAP ERP, including incident assignment to technicians, order processing, spare parts management, and purchasing, sales tracking, and reporting on mobile devices. Today, Abantia technicians do not have to report into headquarters to receive an assignment. Armed in the field with a Samsung Galaxy tablet, they now receive work orders depending on current location. Google Navigator accesses each technician's location and provides the best route to the customer.

Now, while at the customer site, the technician can make reports instantaneously through the tablet on material, spare parts, and replacement parts. The system allocates replacement parts in real time so at the end of the day, the technician knows exactly what needs to be replenished. Technicians can even use the built-in camera on the tablet to attach photographs of the failure or damage. And when a technician does not have access to the Internet, SAP Mobile Platform provides functionality to work offline.

Once the job is completed, the technician generates a bill of delivery on the tablet screen, captures the customer's signature, and then pushes it to SAP ERP, which automatically e-mails the invoice to the customer. There are no more disputes over services performed, which results in faster collection of payment. All of these actions instantly synchronize back to headquarters with the contact center management functionality in SAP ERP to better manage customer information. Now management, once concerned with inefficiency and cost overruns, can see every aspect of a project.

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Increased productivity and efficiency

Abantia technicians can now access relevant business information at any time and from anywhere. Management can track every project, see where the technicians are, analyze what they've done, what parts are used, and how many kilometers they have driven. Overall efficiency improved significantly over a period of one year: the company realized 80% savings in administrative personnel hours, almost 3,000 hours saved on technical issues, and 35,000 kilometers saved in unnecessary driving. There are no more invoice disputes, as the customer now signs off on the repair or installation at the time of completion.

The overall quality of Abantia's business processes is much higher. They eliminated an error-prone paper process through the use of customer relationship management tools. Managing their customers is much more efficient. Employees have adopted the new solution and spend less time doing administrative tasks such as reentering data into the system. Their non-IT users have easily adapted to this new way of doing business. The tablet and applications are user-friendly and provide information at the speed of light. Technicians now have a powerful tool at their fingertips.

"In less than one year, we have seen a payback on our investment," says CIO Fabregas. "We are saving money on hours worked, there is less human error, no more unnecessary driving from wrong directions, and fewer customer service issues."

80%

Fewer administrative personnel hours

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Considering the possibilities

The Abantia team has seen the power of SAP mobile solutions and is looking at additional contact management capabilities on mobile devices. The company is also developing an environment with mobile customer relationship management analytics for CXOs and business workflows for travel expenses and other related items. By the end of 2013 Abantia will have 50 technicians globally using the new mobile solution. Management expects to use SAP Mobile Platform to develop new applications for reporting hours and expenses of their employees.

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