



## BROSE

# AN AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLIER FINDS THE PERFECT BALANCE WITH SAP® SOLUTIONS

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**Christian Ley**, Head of Information Systems,  
Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH & Co. KG

### QUICK FACTS

#### Company

- Name: Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH & Co. KG
- Location: Coburg, Germany
- Industry: Automotive
- Products and services: Components and systems for vehicle doors and seats
- Revenue: €2.3 billion
- Employees: 9,130
- Web site: [www.brose.com](http://www.brose.com)
- Partner: SAP® Consulting

#### Challenges and Opportunities

- Rollout of the SAP ERP application in 19 countries
- Setup of an enterprise service-oriented architecture (enterprise SOA)
- Implementation of new processes with reusable functions

#### Objectives

- Standardize and harmonize global data and processes
- Increase flexibility and agility for the adaptation and development of business processes
- Integrate processes in project and change management

#### SAP Solutions and Services

- SAP ERP
- SAP NetWeaver® Business Intelligence component
- SAP NetWeaver Portal component
- SAP NetWeaver Application Server component
- SAP Records Management application

#### Implementation Highlights

- Setup of a globally standardized IT landscape based on the SAP NetWeaver technology platform
- Development of a business process master list that contains all the processes and functions used
- Encapsulation of function modules

#### Why SAP

- Software that is implemented globally on the basis of extensive industry experience
- Convincing concept of enterprise SOA

#### Benefits

- Integrated business processes
- Quick implementation of new legal and local requirements by combining existing functions
- Complete overview of internal project costs and status
- Standardized access to information and applications throughout company
- Uniform and harmonized data

## AN AUTOMOTIVE SUPPLIER FINDS THE PERFECT BALANCE WITH SAP® SOLUTIONS

Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH & Co. KG, an almost 100-year-old family business based in Coburg, Germany, needs flexibility to work successfully with 40 international vehicle brands and leading seat manufacturers in 19 countries. Even though the automotive products that Brose manufactures and supplies are similar, the customer and partner requests are as diverse as the legal regulations for the company's production plants located around the world. In the automotive industry, new requirements are constantly being made, and companies need to implement them quickly – in fact, speed is essential.

To achieve the necessary flexibility, Brose uses a centralized IT landscape and a business process platform that is based on the SAP® ERP application and the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform. "We decided to implement SAP software because we wanted to work with the market leader and a global partner. It was completely the right decision to make," says Christian Ley, head of information systems at Brose.

### Harmonizing Data and Processes

At Brose, having sales subsidiaries and development and production locations spread around the world presented a challenge. Although the company has remained headquartered in Coburg since it opened its first production site there in 1919, global data and processes were not yet standardized or harmonized. Brose's centralized corporate structure proved beneficial when implementing a centralized IT infrastructure, however: "Having this kind of organization meant that we could implement the software at all our sites around the world quickly and follow a stringent strategy," says Ley.

Brose needed a greater degree of flexibility and agility for the adaptation and development of business processes. With the SAP ERP application, Brose could standardize all the master data, bills of materials, and contracts across

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the company and access them at any time. "We no longer have to harmonize our master data – now we just have one centrally managed data record," explains Ley.

In addition, the company needed to integrate its processes in project management and in change management. The internal project management process had integration gaps, and projects were difficult to track. The change management process, which involves frequent changes to specifications for parts, was paper-based, lengthy, and required too much employee effort.

### Implementing a Central Library for Business Processes

The implementation began at a plant in Curitiba, Brazil, and continued in another 22 plants in more than 10 countries. At all the sites, the IT experts concentrated on the standard functionality. The last location, a plant in Shanghai, went live in 2006. "The implementation has been completed in all the plants. The next step is to extend our solutions and get the most out of the harmonized data and processes," explains Ley.

Brose considers the highlight of the implementation in the various countries to be the introduction of the business process master list. The company collected all the processes and functions that were developed during the global software rollout over the past few years in a central library. "We have a central library of all our reusable business processes and functions," says Stefan Daumann, Brose's head of software development.

Brose is reusing these processes and functions to create new business processes, true to the principles of enterprise service-oriented architecture (enterprise SOA). This business-driven software architecture enables Brose to continue on its successful course. The company can already claim that one in four vehicles produced in the world is equipped with at least one Brose product – and that trend is increasing.



“The projects we have completed have shown that we are using our flexible architecture profitably, and we are gradually adding new functions to the standard software.”

Christian Ley, Head of Information Systems, Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH & Co. KG

In the past few years, the company's interactions with partners and customers have become more complex. “Our customers don't always run their business in the same way. The ways in which we cooperate and use IT are becoming increasingly different,” explains Ley. Consequently, Brose needs to constantly adapt and develop its existing applications, which the business process master list allows the company to do.

When it comes to adapting software, however, Brose does more than simply build on the existing processes: “A goods receipt process can vary subtly, for example, depending on the way the plants are set up,” explains Daumann.

“We can store all the information from a complex change process in a file and noticeably increase transparency.”

Stefan Daumann, Head of Software Development, Brose Fahrzeugteile GmbH & Co. KG

His team is now working on dividing these processes by their individual functionalities, which can be combined and their sequence changed to create new processes. As such, Brose has realized the principle of enterprise SOA using SAP software. “The concept of enterprise SOA allows us to find the perfect balance between standardization and flexibility,” says Ley. The IT experts at Brose can now offer a suitable function for almost any request they receive from their colleagues around the world. “It is now easy for us to implement changes quickly thanks to SAP NetWeaver and the concept of enterprise SOA,” says Ley.

### Clear and Manageable Internal Projects

Another business process that Brose redesigned and integrated was its internal project management. In the past, internal project plans were mainly available in Microsoft Excel table format. Managers found it difficult to get a precise overview of the current internal projects.

To resolve this issue, Daumann and his team developed an integrated process supported by the business process master list. Using a form on the company's intranet, which is itself based on the SAP NetWeaver Portal component, the project leads can create a Web-

based request with the project's objectives, deadlines, and benefits. Then the request is forwarded to the automatic approval workflow.

If the manager approves the project, then it is assigned a number and administered in SAP ERP. The employees who are responsible for the project, as well as the managers and controllers, can track the progress of the project and its status. They can determine whether the costs are within budget and whether the project will be completed on schedule. “We no longer have any integration gaps and can track all our internal projects using the extensive reporting options,” says Daumann.

The reporting options at Brose are enabled by the SAP NetWeaver Business Intelligence component. Requests and reports are displayed in detail, and the content and decisions can be archived. The costs, objectives, and benefits of a project are regularly updated. “The defined approval workflow saves our project leads a lot of time. It's very worthwhile,” adds Daumann.

### Redesigning Change Management

The redesigned change management process has also proven to be very beneficial to the company. “The aim was to immediately make available all the relevant information that is accumulated during a change management process to all our sites around the world and manage the required tasks for approving and implementing technical changes,” explains Walter Redinger, head of information systems and engineering.

Because the specifications for the automotive parts that Brose uses change frequently, and products must be adapted to meet the customers' latest requirements, Brose needed a streamlined change management process. The process used to involve several employees filling out checklists, a change order, and other documents. “The process was heavily paper-based and as a result, very long,” recalls Redinger.

Today the entire change management process is automated with the SAP Records Management application. Employees can display tasks, responsibilities, and the processing status of a change order. Users receive reminder workflows with direct links to their specific tasks. Paper files have been replaced with digital equivalents that consist of business documents and data records with structured content and secure storage.

Since SAP Records Management is typically used for customer or personnel files, using it to store changes to materials is an innovative idea that originated with the IT experts at Brose. "We can store all the information from a complex change process in a file and noticeably increase transparency," says Daumann. The SAP NetWeaver Application Server component acts as a central document management server that supports fast access to the application across the company.

The new change management process at Brose has paid off. The number of correction loops required has fallen, and lead times and processing effort have both been reduced. Furthermore, the time taken to access information has decreased dramatically.

### Secure Archiving with Enterprise Services

At Brose, all important files and documents are archived automatically using enterprise services. "In the archiving process, this is necessary so that archived files and folders cannot be changed any more," explains Marc Florschütz, project lead in software development at Brose. Using enterprise services is all part of the enterprise SOA concept, which Brose is realizing on a step-by-step basis.

### Looking Toward Employee Self-Service

"The projects we have completed have shown that we are using our flexible architecture profitably, and we are gradually adding new functions to the standard software," says Ley. In addition, Brose has more initiatives planned for the coming months. The company intends to automate customer project management, which will involve reusing the functionality from internal project management that has been developed and is stored in the business process master list. Employees at Brose will also be able to plan their trips using employee self-services and to find out if any of their colleagues are traveling the same route.

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