GROUPE HAMELIN

FRENCH OFFICE SUPPLY FIRM INTEGRATES THREE BUSINESSES WITH SAP® SOFTWARE

"We found that SAP software was the one solution with the process integration and multilingual and multicurrency support we needed to achieve complete business transformation."

Jean-Marc Viallatte, Chief Supply Chain Officer, Groupe Hamelin

QUICK FACTS

Company
- Name: Groupe Hamelin
- Location: Caen, France
- Industry: Consumer products
- Products and services: Office supplies and accessories, stationery goods, art supplies
- Revenue: €600 million
- Employees: 2,800
- Web site: www.hamelinbrands.com
- Implementation partner: SAP® Consulting

Challenges and Opportunities
- Streamline operations across numerous locations in a growing family-owned concern
- Transform multiple business lines into a single unified group while maintaining the core culture
- Raise customer satisfaction and improve the corporate bottom line

Objectives
- Institute a common vocabulary across 3 constituent businesses and 50 sites
- Improve inventory management and demand planning
- Achieve one version of the truth across operational and financial processes

SAP Solutions and Services
- SAP ERP application
- SAP Supply Chain Management application
- SAP NetWeaver® Business Warehouse component
- SAP BusinessObjects™ Web Intelligence® software

Implementation Highlights
- Managed sweeping organizational change while implementing multiple applications
- Preserved maximum system uptime and employee productivity
- Completed initial implementation within budget and on schedule
- Proved effectiveness so well in the first pilot that users yet to be integrated expect no trouble

Why SAP
- Best match for current multilingual and multicurrency processing needs
- Scalability to accommodate additional global growth
- Reliable expertise proven during engagements at subsidiaries

Benefits
- 99% accuracy in inventory assessment within the first 3 months
- Better general oversight through transparent, efficient processing across the extended enterprise
- Sharper competitive edge and capacity for higher sales volume
- Simpler financial consolidation

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HAMELIN BRANDS

Despite a century of steady expansion in Europe, Groupe Hamelin has remained entrepreneurial at heart. But by the year 2000, a complex web of legacy processes and patched oversight structures threatened to dull its competitive edge in the age of globalization. "We had reached critical mass," says Jean-Marc Viallatte, the firm's chief supply chain officer. "We needed SAP software to transform three diverse businesses into one financial unit without jeopardizing our entrepreneurial small-company culture."

Recognizing the Need for Business Integration

Groupe Hamelin is ultimately descended from a single shop founded in Caen, France, in 1864 to produce and sell ledger tablets to accountants. A century and a half later, the family-owned company has evolved into a leading manufacturer and distributor of office supplies and paper goods, including several popular brands of notebooks, filing materials, office accessories, art supplies, and envelopes. Growth has been primarily by acquisition. As a result, the company was relying on multiple disjointed processes across numerous locations when it began looking for an enterprise integration solution.

"We were a constellation of nearly autonomous units, and we knew the change to a single collaborative organization would be stressful," Viallatte continues. "Every subsidiary was infused with the core Hamelin values of respect for all staff members and confidence in their decisions. So we needed an integration partner who could understand that culture."

Choosing a Solution

The database at headquarters was a non-SAP product, and the corresponding back-office solution seemed too inflexible for a company of 2,800 proudly independent employees. "We are still small compared to giant producers of automobiles or chemicals, for instance – so our solution could definitely not be the same size as theirs," explains Viallatte.

Several Hamelin subsidiaries had recently implemented components of the SAP® ERP application. After studying those projects for a few months, Viallatte and his team evaluated SAP applications to support enterprise-wide inventory management and other integration initiatives. The team determined that additional SAP software, together with SAP Consulting services, best satisfied the key objectives for an inventory management solution implemented with minimal disruption and supporting multiple languages and currencies.

Paralleling the Organizational Change

Bringing a single vocabulary and vision to widely scattered locations that shared little history – and dealt in products as diverse as file folders, art papers, and office lamps – was no mean feat. SAP ERP and the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform had to serve as a backbone that let Groupe Hamelin protect previous infrastructure investments, design a unified architecture, and standardize cross-functional processes in multiple businesses.

The immediate task was to harmonize operational processes and inventory forecasting. First, the team deployed functionality for supply chain collaboration and demand planning from the SAP Supply Chain Management (SAP SCM) application. With SAP SCM, Groupe Hamelin can maintain its small-company

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Jean-Marc Viallatte, Chief Supply Chain Officer, Groupe Hamelin

adaptability, balancing real-time customer demand against continually monitored supply signals. But it can also harness robust functionality for optimizing order management and logistics, keeping fulfilment and transportation operations smoothly synchronized. And that ultimately raises customer satisfaction and corporate revenue.

The layered implementation of supply chain management functionality by a joint team of Hamelin and SAP personnel featured two major pilots over 18 months. The first pilot, which integrated the five largest sites, was an unqualified success.

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Jean-Marc Viallatte, Chief Supply Chain Officer, Groupe Hamelin

"And we were implementing the new software against the backdrop of ongoing organizational overhaul," Viallatte is quick to emphasize.

Building in Business Intelligence

Once Groupe Hamelin had integrated planning processes, consolidated insight into operations and finances could evolve. Today all stakeholders share a single version of the truth transparent throughout the enterprise. The SAP NetWeaver Business Warehouse (SAP NetWeaver BW) component and SAP BusinessObjects™ Web Intelligence® software have begun delivering the right information automatically to those who need it – while they are formulating the daily decisions that help drive success.

Already SAP NetWeaver BW aggregates and integrates data, transforming it for use by powerful yet intuitive analytic functions in SAP BusinessObjects Web Intelligence. Soon the SAP solution will relay the resulting actionable information to an increasingly mobile workforce through an intranet accessible even on handheld devices. "We have just begun to fine-tune business analytics at Groupe Hamelin, but being able to collaborate at this level is already a daily win for us," says Viallatte.

Reaping the Rewards

Groupe Hamelin completed its initial implementation of SAP software within budget and on schedule; progressive rollout for three additional years will encompass 1,800 business users across all operating units. The success of the pilots has led the remaining users to look forward to the changeover, expecting little or no discomfort during the ramp-up.

Within three months of going live, planners could demonstrate 99% accuracy in determining inventory levels, which represents an astounding improvement over the 30% to 40% of a year earlier. "Our SAP solution is crucial for ensuring that we deliver the right products to the right customers in an efficient and reliable distribution system," Viallatte concludes.

Anticipating Future Success

A strong framework is now in place to make period-end reporting an automated routine, rather than a manual paper chase. Strategizing is underway to address the security concerns that arise from globalization with functionality for identity management and regulatory documentation from SAP BusinessObjects governance, risk, and compliance solutions. Groupe Hamelin also expects to continue adding volume and market share in Europe and building out its art supplies business in Asia and the Americas. And closer to home, the company is building a striking new facility in Normandy, bringing its story full circle.

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