



SUCCESS STORY

# GETZNER WERKSTOFFE

## Eyes firmly fixed on the standard

Getzner Werkstoffe is reshaping its engineering-related workflows. The CENIT SAP PLM Foundation is making sure that this re-engineering process doesn't stray too far from the SAP methodology and yet leaves the hidden champion maximum creative freedom.

**Sound is everywhere. And sound can quickly turn into noise, causing inconvenience, annoyance and even damage to health. Not just we humans can be affected: Many studies have shown that technology-based sounds and vibrations are highly stressful for animals as well.**

**As technology leader in the field of vibration insulation, Getzner contributes to our life quality by reducing noise and vibration. The company ensures that trains travel more comfortably and quietly, that machines do their job more efficiently and that people like you and me can get some peace and quiet. The hidden champion Getzner is especially proud of the high-tech materials Sylomer, Sylodyn, Sylodamp and Isotop, not least because they are products of the company's own inventive spirit. These polyurethane-based materials are used in railway superstructures, elastic building foundations e.g. in densely populated areas, or as construction components – and these are only a few of the many uses. Twelve business locations in Europe, the US, Australia, India, China and Japan attest to Getzner's desire for customer proximity. Deeply rooted in the Austrian state of Vorarlberg yet also a dynamic player on the international stage, the company defines itself by values such as handshake quality, trust and reliability, but innovation as well.**

## QUIETLY SUCCESSFUL DIGITALIZATION

Digitalization can be approached by bulldozer, or in silent mode. Getzner chose the latter strategy, says our interview partner Ernst Krug, SAP Demand & Project Manager at Getzner Werkstoffe GmbH in the town of Bürs, Austria. Introducing SAP Engineering Control Center (ECTR) as the design division's new gateway to the SAP world was a consistent and focused but nevertheless subtle move that left upstream and downstream processes virtually untouched. For good reason: "Our internal processes were shaped in the tradition of a typical innovation-driven, medium-scale Austrian business. In our work ethic, there are many, many dependencies that are virtually impossible to describe in a rulebook which would then have to be binding on everyone. Whatever the case may be, our immovable constant is the final release of the technical drawing – the decisive moment around which many of our discussions revolve." In time, the company was compelled to act: "As we kept growing, there were more

and more calls for us to increase our level of transparency. We wanted to be able to give correct answers to questions like "what versions of the documents are available during a certain stage of order processing?" and "are they even valid anymore?"

GetznerWerkstoffe is an independent subsidiary of Getzner Textil. In the 1970s, this Vorarlberg-based family business became SAP's very first client in the region. The company possessed high competence in applying technical methodologies to textile manufacturing, and it was able to use these skills – very successfully, as it turned out – to develop and produce high-end damping foams as well. It's a success story that left its mark on the company's technology-driven, readily adaptable processes. But management wanted to avoid falling under the wheels of runaway complexity. The aim is now to harness the free but also ingrained way of doing things by imposing a standard form of IT



support. It didn't take long for the company to turn to process consultant CENIT, a provider who knew how to tailor the standard SAP IT products to suit the body size and figure of Getzner Werkstoffe – without anything pinching anywhere and without any restrictions on creative elbow room. CENIT is thoroughly familiar with the peculiarities of manufacturing businesses and their informal, often convoluted communication pathways, knowing full well that these idiosyncrasies are precisely what led to these companies' success in the first place.

## BENEFITS OF SAP DIRECT INTEGRATION

Getzner Werkstoffe thus went looking for a PLM system, as we would call it today. Should it be a Solidworks-type product? After all, Solidworks has been a popular CAD system for many years. Or a deeply integrated SAP solution instead? "It was clear that we wanted to avoid interfaces at all costs. I recommended taking a closer look at SAP ECTR. Sure, our engineers had their reservations about the traditional SAP GUI, but the user guidance contained in SAP ECTR made a very positive impression on them", Ernst Krug remembers. "It's truly amazing how easy it is to create an SAP ECTR data record in SAP ERP. With just a few mouse clicks, you can create material masters and derive bills of material", says Ernst Krug by way of example.

## STEADY FOCUS ON CLEAR OBJECTIVES

Asked to describe the goals associated with the investment decision, the Getzner manager mentions two different perspectives: that of the IT staffers and that of the engineers. "For the IT people, SAP ECTR meant that direct integration with SAP would avoid interfaces and let us save as much as possible directly to the SAP database. The idea was to avoid creating a parallel CAD-related IT by deploying an independent PLM system. It would also let us

to centralize document management by installing a cross-board user administration and uniform data filing system, rather than using a whole range of SAP DVS drives as we had been doing."

The engineers, on the other hand, were focused on their desire to obtain a modern, maximally user-friendly interface. At the end of the dispute, direct Solidworks-SAP integration won the day: in addition to easy access to the SAP objects and functions, the intuitive user interface offers a flexible folder and window structure. With these freedoms, the users can organize their business objects in whatever way they prefer.

Initial experience with SAP ECTR was gained in the context of a sandbox exercise based on CENIT'S SAP PLM Foundation. As Ernst Krug reports, "the initial goal was to get the SAP system up and running, but also the content server and the archive which runs in the background. We arrived at this point in late 2019, early 2020." The CENIT methodology permitted a quick, hands-on approach to working with the new, direct CAD integration: "We created the first documents from ECTR in SAP, learned how to manage Solidworks assemblies, practiced copying, ran sample processes using various client drawings – and the SAP PLM Foundation solution implemented by CENIT came up with error-free status networks. The added value of now being able to work with the business objects "Functional Location" and "Equipment" in an integrated way opened up perspectives for additional projects. We then cured a few minor teething problems, and after an eight-week test phase SAP ECTR was up and running smoothly" – a surprisingly short period, Ernst Krug emphasizes.

As a manager, he understands the benefits of a goal-oriented sandbox pilot: Results are achieved quickly, and the process offers an opportunity to convince the users of the benefits of the



new technology. “It got them curious and quickly made them lose their hands-off attitude to the new interface. For a business of our size, there’s no alternative to starting out with a preconfigured solution, because if you have to go through a major customizing effort first, your introduction quickly becomes too complex and your future users will lose interest. CENIT’s SAP PLM Foundation approach helped us a great deal in this sense as well.”

## THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW PATH: PROCESS SECURITY

For process steering purposes – specifically, to control order processing and change management – Getzner Werkstoffe will rely on cenitCONNECT Advanced Process Management (APM). Getzner’s clients customarily submit drawings, together with information on installation details and specifications for the insulation material. The relevant engineering and manufacturing data are generated based on a review of the submission by the development division. Upon release, the drawings are transmitted to production planning, which generates the material master, bill of materials and work schedule as relevant to the client order. “We have to define what information must be available before the production planning drawing can be generated. From now on, the SAP PLM Foundation solution by CENIT will let us map this process in its entirety,” says Ernst Krug – no ifs or buts. Currently, the company is in the process of deciding on final definitions for the respective processes and becoming more familiar with the look and feel of the solution, i.e. learning how to optimally exploit its potential.

“Our change management is extremely dependent on the individual customer. For the most part, the associated workflows are described in our operating procedures, but usually there’s no flexible process guidance on how to proceed in special circumstances. For instance, what is supposed to happen in the event of a rejection? If we’re going to apply the quality guidelines consistently, such occurrences have to be carefully documented too. CENIT’s solution does just that, in that cenitCONNECT APM fully documents the entire procedure in SAP. APM acts like a kind of navigation system for all types of workflows”, explains Jakob Röhrenbach, Account Executive, Digital Supply Chain SAP at CENIT’s business unit SAP Solutions.

cenitCONNECT APM is template-based, which means that, depending on the product group or as otherwise required, modifications can be made to the individual process steps “while leaving the underlying workflow untouched so as to remain compliant with business requirements. At CENIT, we quite consciously call this flexible process control” says Jakob Röhrenbach. One might draw a parallel to Google Maps: the destination stays the same, but the route to it may vary depending on circumstances. To offer some background: The handling of a collaborative business process, stored in a workflow, runs like a continuous thread through a company. But truly formalizing it remains something of an exercise in futility because in most instances (Röhrenbach: up to 95%) there will be deviations. Small wonder, then, that staff may feel tempted to circumvent the

IT when making corrections. But this can lead to an uncontrollable proliferation of workarounds in no time. cenitCONNECT APM prevents precisely this sort of development.

## A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFUL DIGITALIZATION

“We succeeded in implementing cenitCONNECT APM with only minimal support from our CENIT colleagues. It all went so smoothly! Currently, we are busy deciding how we want our release processes to run,” says Ernst Krug. Digitalization remains a journey, and one has to keep getting all stakeholders on board, time and again. “It’s become clear to us that we first have to concentrate on the release of engineering and manufacturing documents. If we cast a wider net, we’ll get lost in our discussions. A helpful feature is that in cenitCONNECT APM, the technical units can define their own rulebooks. And the software is great at supporting processes once they have been defined and collated in a rulebook.”

Jakob Röhrenbach is intimately familiar with the challenges facing medium-scale manufacturing businesses: “This is why CENIT always offers its clients a consulting methodology, not just IT products like SAP ECTR or cenitCONNECT APM as standalones. We call this all-round product the “SAP PLM Foundation”. It contains a consulting component that intelligently combines the various IT products into an end-to-end client solution.” Röhrenbach describes it as laying the foundation for a PLM building, with successive “floors” being added in the form of additional IT solutions. Seen this way, CENIT can be described as general contractor for a turnkey building – a modern PLM infrastructure.

## SUMMARY: A RELIABLE PARTNER FOR FUTURE-PROOF PLM

*So, what was Ernst Krug's impression of CENIT as "general contractor"? "We had wanted to invest as little effort as possible in the sandbox pilot. After all, it could have gone wrong. But with CENIT, it was the right way to go!", says Ernst Krug in looking back. One reason the team succeeded in minimizing uncertainties was that they resisted straying from the SAP standard: "It was our intention to manage with as few additional document types and status modes as possible. We put our trust in what the cenitCONNECT APM template offered." Naturally, this also required a willingness to compromise. In retrospect, the strategy paid off handsomely. "Now we don't need to worry about how to go about integrating new processes. That's a great advantage of the SAP PLM Foundation: We can rely fully on CENIT!" The staff at Getzner Werkstoffe now refer to the SAP standard as the "CENIT SAP PLM Foundation solution standard" – a bit of a mouthful, but "nomen est omen".*

## AT A GLANCE

### THE CHALLENGE

- Support of a release management scheme by way of deep SAP integration of Solidworks models within a complex customer- and product-specific process environment, previously without clearly defined workflows, with flexible SAP process control

### THE SOLUTION

- SAP direct integration via the IT product SAP Engineering Control Center (ECTR)
- Modern user guidance of an SAP product for high acceptance levels among engineering staff
- CENIT SAP PLM Foundation as holistic implementation approach, consisting of the IT products SAP ECTR and cenitCONNECT Advanced Process Management (APM) as well as a proven consulting methodology developed specifically for medium-size businesses

### BENEFITS (AS OF CURRENT PROJECT STATUS)

- Rapid IT prototyping based on a specially developed sandbox approach, avoiding protracted customization
- Comprehensive investment protection thanks to linkage of Solidworks data with SAP business objects, in close conformity with SAP methodology
- Maximum flexibility thanks to template-based cenitCONNECT APM and competence-building for independent process design
- Avoidance of parallel IT in the form of additional third-party PLM technology

## ABOUT CENIT

CENIT empowers sustainable digitalization. With a broad solutions and services portfolio, CENIT enables clients to optimize their horizontal and vertical business processes. Our solutions are based on innovative technologies in: product lifecycle management, the digital factory and enterprise information management. With interdisciplinary knowledge of the processes involved and their considerable expertise in the field, CENIT consultants provide customers with end-to-end advice to ensure that solutions are implemented with an understanding of the entire value chain.

With a holistic approach and based on trusted partnerships, CENIT takes responsibility for solutions on behalf of our clients. From the initial consultation to the introduction of innovative IT solutions, right through to ensuring a cost-effective operation. The CENIT team adapts to each client, taking a practical approach, which enables measurable operational optimizations. CENIT has been helping prestigious customers in key industries to gain competitive advantages for over 30 years.

CENIT has nearly 900 employees worldwide who work with customers from: automotive, aerospace, industrial equipment, tool and mold manufacturing, financial services, and trade and consumer products industries.

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## CONTACT US NOW

### CENIT AG

Industriestraße 52-54  
70565 Stuttgart

T. +49 711 7825-30

F. +49 711 7825-4000

E. [info@cenit.com](mailto:info@cenit.com)

