berta plus

The Plus for the middle class

SaKa Plant Breeding

Case Study

Real-time business intelligence with DeepSee maximizes crop yields

SaKa Plant Breeding

The SaKa Pflanzenzucht GmbH & Co. KG can look back on more than one-hundred years of tradition in breeding seed potatoes. Farmers worldwide trust the quality and availability of high-quality seeds from the Hamburgbased company and its internationally operating marketing and sales organization Solana GmbH & Co. KG. Currently SaKa offers its customers some 50 different types of potatoes for various requirements, soil classes, and climate zones.

Anyone expecting that agriculture is a slow business would be completely mistaken. "Many in our business appear not to have changed at all over the last hundred years. Breeding a new variety still takes around ten years. However, this long period for a new cultivar does not mean that we are running an unhurried business," said Torsten Spill, managing director of SaKa Pflanzenzucht, in describing the initial situation. "This is due in part to the fact that, unlike

other industries, agriculture deals with perishable goods. Fall harvests and quantities available for delivery in spring should never be identical despite our best efforts. And for our main business, we only have a time frame of six weeks around March."

Greater efficiency

In recent years pressure has grown on farmers to increase efficiency – and this in turn has resulted in increased seed delivery requirements. Farmers have to calculate their seed orders as precisely as possible to avoid being stuck with leftover perishable quantities. At the same time naturally they have to optimally utilize their acreage. If they determine during sowing they need additional seed, there is often extreme time pressure – especially if they have only rented farming machinery for a few days.
One of the greatest challenges SaKa Pflanzenzucht faces is the need to process ad-

ditional binding customer orders as quickly as possible during the short delivery window between mid-February and the end of March.

"Often, customers call us directly from the tractor so to speak, and ask whether they can immediately re-order a specific seed," explained Torsten Spill. "Then we need exact information on our stocks and their storage locations." If only lower seed quantities are available, they should be apportioned to all interested parties as fairly as possible and as can be realized logistically. Knowledge of the seed quantities available is critical to the farmer's operation; they directly impact crop yields and his income. Timely information is an important part of the quality we try to offer in our customer care."

Although used successfully for many years, the **berta** ERP solution from long-term In-terSystems partner **globalerp** was unable to grow and keep up with the increased requirements. While SaKa/Solana group looked for alternatives on the market, **globalerp** set about making something completely new – an ERP system with built-in real-time business intelligence (BI). "We were certain that none of our competitors had

a product in their portfolioto correspond to SaKa's requirements profile," said **global erp**'s managing director Karsten Preuß in explaining the situation at that time. "But the requirements of our long-term partner demonstrated that their needs had expanded. BI had become a critical factor – an element we absolutely wanted to offer our customers. "**berta, global erp**'s ERP solution used Intersystems

Caché as its database. In 2008, the developers at InterSystems released Deep-See, a solution capable of enhancing applications with BI functionality based on real-time data. This approach greatly appealed to SaKa, even more so given that **global erp** knew the business of the seed specialists in precise detail and could already implement the required information – including drill-down options – in the appropriate locations.
The result was **bertaplus**, and industry-independent product range for commercial and manufacturing firms. The ERP merchandise management system is the heart of **bertaplus**. The solution also includes numerous optional modules such as warehouse logistics, E-Commerce, and point of sale system.

With the capabilities of DeepSee in the background, for the first time users have dashboards available from the application as well as drilldown functions — navigation into varied levels of detail, down to individual pieces of data. Business intelligence is therefore a natural transaction embedded directly in the user's process within the application, instead of as in the past where additional software was required along with costly export procedures.

"As an InterSystems partner, we utilize the full capabilities of the Caché database, which enables both access to objects and fast SQL queries," explained Preuß.
"With DeepSee, InterSystems offers its application partners software that enables real embedded business intelligence in perfect interaction with Caché."
globalerp can now offer its customers a solution that allows business intelligence to expand to middle management without problems, resulting in better decision making on a daily basis. Another benefit: Senior management can access all company-critical information

at anytime, without having to wait for monthly reports. SaKa Managing Director Torsten Spill confirms it. "Thanks to direct access to our real warehouse volumes, today we can deliver much faster binding commitments to customer queries than in the past. Information regarding available seed quantities, itemized by type and storage location, is now just a click away when an order is received. The same is true when events occur that reduce the inventory of a particular variety.

This comprehensive, up-to-date overview enables us to optimize transport costs from the storage location to the farm and pass these savings on to the customer." Nevertheless, Torsten Spill sees this as just the beginning. "Forecasts and prognoses are at least as important as the sales and logistics functions for us. We have to constantly keep an eye on market trends — much the same as weather and climate changes, and other factors. For this reason we will rely even more on BI support. The more integrated, the better."

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