



AT TOP SPEED INTO THE WINTER SPORTS SEASON WITH IFS APPLICATIONS™

As a manufacturer of sports articles, Völkl Sports in Straubing, Germany, depends on IT support to efficiently control the complex processes in production and sales. Seasonally dependent, the ski production is particularly exacting in respect of logistics and planning. With IFS Applications Völkl has a future-proof enterprise solution with the agility to meet the demands of a volatile market.

PLANNING AND LOGISTICS ARE BUSINESS-CRITICAL

The IT department in Straubing, i.e. IT Manager Gerold Fath and the 5 members of his team, provides support for six locations, including the 200 local PC work stations. The staff is responsible for data processing in production and sales logistics and for supporting the database of the “sister product” Marker (ski bindings). The various interacting processes make very high demands of the team and the technology.

In the framework of ski production in the Völkl development and production centre in Straubing, different materials must be combined to get the final product. The process is mainly automated, but also requires a considerable amount of manual work.

Production is planned in spring so that the latest range of models gets to the sports shops in time for the winter season, including shops overseas. The production is at full speed until the fall. To control the complex relations between production planning, materials supply and efficient utilization of machine capacities, Völkl must rely on a single effective software system that covers all processes in production: production order planning, breakdown of parts lists, determination and purchasing of parts required, feedback from production, and project status.

INTRODUCTION OF A NEW ERP SYSTEM

In 1995, the introduction of a global and homogeneous system for a better long-term integration of the individual production and sales locations was considered for the first time. The previous solution had worked reliably, but it was not agile enough to meet future requirements.

In 1997, Völkl took the definite decision to introduce a new enterprise solution. At the same time, however, the Straubing plant was to move into a new production building and the data processing technology was to be changed completely. The move took place in 1998 and the introduction of a new enterprise solution was planned as of 1999. In 2000, an assessment of the systems under consideration took place. IFS had already provided the previous model for Völkl and was selected again—now with IFS Applications.

ABOUT VÖLKL SPORTS

With manufacturing and R&D facilities in Straubing, Germany, Völkl Sports produces about 500,000 pairs of skis, 30,000 snowboards and 120,000 tennis rackets per year. Its products are available in more than 50 countries. Founded in 1923, Völkl is now part of the Marker Völkl Group headquartered in Baar/Zug, Switzerland, and has about 1,000 employees.



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SPECIAL CHALLENGE—LOGISTICS

The goal was to optimize all business processes and combine them into one cross-linked process-oriented project management. The new system supported purchasing, production, sales, controlling, financials and human resources. Production planning was to be a cornerstone of the new enterprise solution. The project was split up into three steps over time: financials, human resources, and logistics, which included sales, purchasing and ERP system. The financials application went live in April 2002. One month later, the new application for human resources went into operation.

The conversion of the logistics part required the most effort. Production control, which had hitherto been semi-automatic, would be fully automatic in the new system. The central task in this context is performed by the constraint-based scheduling (CBS) control center. In cooperation with an IFS specialist, the project team designed the system according to IFS guidelines.

The background to this customer-specific implementation is product planning. Every year about one third of the ski models are completely new developments, which always requires new parts lists, work schedules, forms and tools. A high degree of optimization is required so that the existing staff can produce varying quantities. At the beginning of the year, the production for the whole year is planned. New production processes must be implemented at short notice, which requires a high degree of agility. Therefore, the CBS control center is connected to the PDM system.

The data are exchanged already during the prototype development, which is decisive for placing orders with materials suppliers, who must also prefabricate the raw materials. Live operation in logistics, manufacturing and distribution started in April 2003.

Major advantages of the system include the complete integration of financials and human resources into the global system and the consistent use of automatic processes via intersite ordering between the individual production and sales organizations. It offers the possibility to satisfy increased demands without additional recruitment of staff.

OPEN FUTURE-PROOF SYSTEM

Today, Völkl benefits from the system based on IFS Applications components and an Oracle database in many ways.

The company uses a system which is proof against the future and open for modifications. The integration of the individual IFS Applications components minimizes the input effort and creates a high level of transparency within the enterprise. By integrating all necessary business processes from development to dispatch electronically in IFS Applications, the information flow between production site and sales organization at Völkl could be optimized. The persons in charge know at any time which shop must get which ski model at which time. The scheduling of reliable delivery dates represents a definite competitive advantage. Another benefit of the new system is the detailed and accelerated reporting. IFS Applications permits also up-to-date, fast and reliable evaluations.

BENEFITS

- Efficient solution for complex processes in financials, human resource management and distribution
- Easy access to information and greater transparency
- Optimized information exchange between manufacturing site and sales organization
- Ability to make more precise delivery promises
- Higher productivity and lower costs thanks to fully automated production control

SOFTWARE

IFS Applications™
 IFS Foundation1™
 IFS Financials™
 IFS Engineering™
 IFS Manufacturing™
 IFS Distribution™
 IFS Maintenance™
 IFS Business Performance™
 IFS Quality Management™
 IFS Document Management™



“Without IFS Applications, we and our team would not be able satisfy the increasing, mainly short-term, demands on the IT department. With the old COBOL system, it took about three weeks to further develop certain functionality. Now we can implement similar tasks in one to three days, which permits us to respond to new demands within an acceptable timeframe.”

Gerold Fath IT Manager Völkl Sports GmbH, Straubing