

MEKOPRINT UPGRADES IFS APPLICATIONS™ IN RECORD TIME

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Mekoprint has made huge progress since the 2008 crisis through organic growth, acquisitions and the introduction of paperless production. The Danish manufacturer has also displayed admirable agility in IT, taking only three months to complete a total upgrade of its older IFS Applications platform—with no negative consequences for customers or employees.

While the financial crisis was tough, it also brought about valuable changes in Mekoprint, a Danish company located in North Jutland that develops and manufactures operating solutions, cabinets, cables and printed electronics, and is a subcontractor for companies throughout Europe. Business was good and profits were strong until 2008 when declining sales forced Mekoprint to review all its processes to optimize and streamline operations as much as possible.

RAPID DEVELOPMENT WITH IFS APPLICATIONS AS RELIABLE ENGINE

Mekoprint emerged from its belt-tightening in excellent shape and has since raced ahead in top gear. In 2012, the company swept all paper out of its production halls, replacing cumbersome analog processes with iPad-based solutions for 270 employees. Revitalized profits have also made new investments possible. Mekoprint established an office in Hong Kong in 2014 and a new factory in Poland in 2015. The latest expansion occurred in 2016 with the acquisition of the CPM Manufacturing factory in Hornslet, Denmark.

All these rapid developments took place with an older version of IFS Applications as the company's reliable business engine. Mekoprint used IFS Applications 2004 until 2016, when it embarked on the biggest upgrade in company history which took place almost simultaneously with the acquisition of CPM Manufacturing. Just two staff implemented the upgrade to IFS Applications 9 in only three months—without the users being affected.

PAINLESS UPGRADE OF MOBILE SOLUTION

"Business continued without any problems. We manufactured and shipped goods to our customers as always. The biggest challenge was migrating our own software, but once all the data was organized, we converted everything in one weekend," says Mekoprint CIO, Lars Bo Nielsen. The upgrade also included the smooth integration of the entire mobile interface developed internally for use in Danish and Polish production facilities.

"This was really essential because everything at our factories in Denmark and Poland runs electronically. Employees use iPads or iPods to view and update everything from production orders and time and attendance registration to information on production, inventory and distribution, work instructions and guidelines, and quality documentation. The entire digital flow is based on IFS business logic, which gives a great overview of the company. All data is live, so if there is a

ABOUT MEKOPRINT

Mekoprint is a family-owned company which was founded in 1954. The company has its headquarters in Støvring, Denmark, employs about 500 employees, and has a total production space of 40,000 m² in Europe. With flexible production in Denmark, Eastern Europe and Asia, the company offers global delivery and reduction in "time-to-market." Mekoprint's production is primarily directed at customers in Europe. Its products consist of 100% customized solutions for industrial and electronics companies.

www.mekoprint.dk

BENEFITS

- Stable system with better architecture and better and newer servers
- Good overview of all company data
- Easier to upgrade as they are now using the standard system
- Logical, flexible and user-friendly system that is easy to manage and maintain

delay in production or shipping, even the sales team knows immediately. This is really smart, but it also adds some vulnerability related to updates, so we are very pleased that it went so smoothly,” says Nielsen, who emphasized that the decision to upgrade was not due to dissatisfaction with the 2004 version.

A STABLE, FUTURE-PROOF SYSTEM

“On the contrary, the system supported us perfectly all the way. But we could see that due to its age, we couldn’t keep it running in the long term. With IFS Applications 9 we have a significantly more stable system with better architecture and better and newer servers. One of the benefits is the addition of an application server layer so we don’t risk losing our connection to the database if we move from one room to another, for example. We can also save our own data directly in the new version, which makes future upgrades significantly easier than before.”

Although Nielsen says the upgrade has exceeded all expectations, the smooth and efficient process has not surprised him. Mekoprint is accustomed to IFS Applications running smoothly. When the company acquired Pumac and GPV Danprint in 2008, both companies moved from their existing Axapta solutions to IFS Applications over a couple of weeks and have run without any problems since. The factory in Poland was up and running in just three months with a faithful copy of the Danish paperless production and a complete Polish language layer. The latest acquisition, CPM Manufacturing in Hornslet, has already been transferred to the IFS Applications platform from an older Baan system.

“IFS Applications is easy to work with. It’s not rocket science. Everything is logical and user-friendly. It’s basically just some columns that need to be moved from one place to another,” explains Nielsen, who is pleased that Mekoprint now has a future-proof business system that is easier to manage and maintain than before. In connection with the upgrade, Mekoprint cleaned up all the local adaptations.

“We now run a completely standard version and plan to upgrade every three years,” says Nielsen.

IFS Applications has the great advantage of being logical and modular, with a strong supporting engine. It provides a great deal of flexibility when making configurations.

Lars Bo Nielsen, CIO, Mekoprint

NO FEAR OF UPGRADES

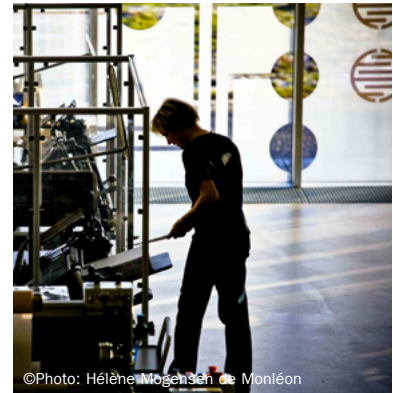
Like Mekoprint, many companies face a decision about what to do with an older, upgradeable IFS Applications platform. The system may have been bloated with locally developed solutions over the years so it has become time-consuming and difficult to maintain. Companies may also lack access to many new features that support modern operations. Nevertheless, the upgrade is postponed because it seems an insurmountable task. Lars Bo Nielsen advises such companies to choose between two options.

“Companies can upgrade in two ways: They can go the comprehensive change management route, in which all processes are meticulously reviewed and optimized, or they can take a more pragmatic approach that starts with upgrading the system, then proceeds to identify and utilize relevant functions. We chose the latter. It’s not so daunting and it’s something we can handle on our own.”

“IFS Applications has the great advantage of being logical and modular, with a strong supporting engine. It provides a great deal of flexibility when making configurations,” concludes Nielsen, who has worked with IFS Applications since 2000 and has implemented six companies on the platform.



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