

arcplan Enterprise streamlines Controlling at Gruner + Jahr



„The options currently available to us in Controlling just can't be compared to the rigid system we had before. For example, we can now produce project reports that would have been impossible previously. This means we can control projects more effectively and at an earlier stage. arcplan Enterprise guides the user step by step through every input stage, resulting in increased functionality and flexibility, and a system that is much easier to operate“.

Karsten Weiß, IT Coordinator, Controlling, and Senior Controller at Gruner + Jahr

INDUSTRY

- Publishing

SOLUTION

- Integrated Controlling application

COMPANY / COUNTRY

- Gruner + Jahr / Germany

REQUIREMENTS

- Up-to-date reports
- Integration of new types of projects
- Adapted, individualized reports
- Improvement in monitoring

SOFTWARE

- arcplan Enterprise
- SAP Business Information Warehouse
- Access databases

USERS

- 20 employees in Controlling

BENEFITS

- Improved management control through up-to-date information
- Simple operation
- Clear gain in flexibility
- Upgradeability to an online management cockpit
- Integration of simulated calculations

Hamburg publisher Gruner + Jahr is Europe's biggest magazine publishing house, with 285 different newspaper and magazine titles in 21 countries on three continents. Some of its bestknown publications include Geo, Stern, Financial Times Deutschland and the management magazine, Impulse. Sales for fiscal year 2007 came to over 2.83 billion Euros, with operating figures at a level of 264 million Euros. The company has over 14,500 employees worldwide.

In January 2005, the publisher introduced the arcplan Enterprise software program to its Controlling Department. arcplan Enterprise enables a faster work pace and is much more flexible than its predecessor. Reports and analyses can not only be accessed at much greater speed, they can also be adapted to suit different requirements. In addition, the arcplan solution enables new projects, such as Internet portals and book series, to be produced and analyzed efficiently.

In search for a fast and flexible solution

G+J's previous system was nearly 15 years old and no longer able to meet the radically increased demands of the Controlling Department: complicated, heavy on resources and out of date, the system was poorly suited to the task of producing new types of projects, had operational issues, and was difficult to use. This meant a lot of time was spent training new employees to use the software and, with every experienced employee who left the department, a bit of software operation expertise went with them.

To make matters worse, the magazine and newspaper market has changed dramatically: the need for the date in Controlling to be analyzed with greater speed and flexibility was becoming increasingly important. The individual solution being used was no longer able to provide this flexibility, as every adaptation was linked to heavy programming input.

A consistent solution with arcplan Enterprise

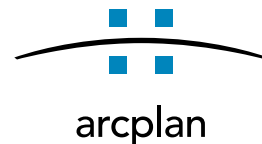
Once the decision to bring in new software to Controlling was made, G+J chose to migrate from an individual solution and go for a tried-and-tested analytics system that could be up and running in a short period of time.

This software would need

- to deliver results in real time,
- be easy to operate,
- produce new projects quickly and without the need for heavy programming input and
- would naturally have to be able to work with the existing SAP Business Information Warehouse (SAP BW).



Gruner + Jahr AG & Co KG
Druck- und Verlagshaus
Hamburg



In the search for a solution, arcplan Enterprise, which has been used since 2001 as part of the management information system in G+J's reporting system, came up. The Controlling software project was carried out in consultation with Stolzenburg & Valera IT Consulting OHG. This consulting firm had been involved in the introduction of the management information system and, since then, had provided the publisher with support.

The new arcplan Enterprise-based reporting system was to be able to extract data from both the SAP system and the ODBC databases. arcplan Enterprise's open approach to accessing existing data-holding systems and the sophisticated way the software is able to operate with other process-oriented applications meant the project could be implemented swiftly and successfully. Since January 2005, the 20 employees involved in the German newspapers section of Controlling have been working with the new solution, and arcplan Enterprise is also being used for the department's portal. Employees can access all the relevant work processes and tasks from the system. It doesn't matter where the data is stored: it can be in the SAP system, in the associated Access databases with the historical data, or in arcplan Enterprise itself.

Efficient monitoring and target-oriented enterprise management

The introduction of the new arcplan solution has brought about many changes: the 120-page monthly report to the Executive Board is produced and printed in a few mouse clicks. If desired, this report – like any other – can be provided as a PDF file. The advantage of providing the report in electronic format is that it can be used in a flexible manner by several employees and is easy to archive.

Flexibility is where it's at: whereas in the previous system only a few standard reports were stored, controllers can now choose from a large number of reports and adapt them individually with regard to scope and content. This requires zero programming input.

Even projects beyond the scope of a newspaper publisher, such as CD series and books, for example, can be recorded and analyzed in reports with clarity, speed and efficiency. Karsten Weiß: "This would have been impossible before from both a technical standpoint and with regard to time".

The time factor is of particular importance, as the sooner reports are available to management, the more efficient and up-to-date the monitoring and management of individual projects will be.

Today, controllers can tell management what the figures look like a day after the end of the month. Karsten Weiß: „At this juncture, the next step is to have a complete online report“. arcplan Enterprise will be used for this also.

In addition, there are plans to upgrade the system to an online management cockpit: this will enable all relevant personnel to have access to reports online. At the end of 2006, a print version of this management cockpit had already been produced. The online version was put in place in 2007, in collaboration with Stolzenburg & Valera IT Consulting OHG, among others. Additionally, as a further step the current cost unit system will be enhanced by the integration of cost center calculations and their analysis in SAP BW and arcplan Enterprise. On this basis, simulated calculations with variations will then be possible.

Partners

Stolzenburg & Valera IT Consulting OHG and Controlling were responsible for implementing the arcplan Enterprise solution. The IT consulting firm has been a successful partner in the implementation of arcplan Enterprise in the past.

arcplan Information Services GmbH

arcplan is a vendor of Enterprise Performance Management software and services that enable cost-effective, cross-functional performance management with real-time data access. Founded in 1993, arcplan supports more than 2,500 customers and 300,000 users worldwide. For more information visit www.arcplan.com.

