



## SAP® EMPLOYEE SELF-SERVICE HELPS STREAMLINE HR PROCESSES

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Jan-Christoph Schüler, HR Manager, ABB AG

### QUICK FACTS

#### Company

- Name: ABB AG
- Location: Mannheim, Germany
- Industry: Engineering, construction, and operations
- Products and services: Power systems, automation solutions, and robotics
- Revenue: US\$29.2 billion (ABB Group)
- Employees: 110,000 (ABB Group)
- Web site: [www.abb.com](http://www.abb.com)
- Implementation partner: Wincor Nixdorf International GmbH

#### Challenges and Opportunities

- Overcome the drawbacks of paper-based HR processes
- Improve communication with shop-floor employees that do not have access to computers or e-mail at work

#### Objectives

- Reduce HR costs through greater efficiency and increased productivity
- Improve HR service standards
- Free up HR staff to focus on strategic tasks

#### SAP® Solutions and Services

- SAP® Employee Self-Service and SAP Manager Self-Service applications
- Employee interaction center (EIC) functionality found in the SAP ERP application

#### Implementation Highlights

- Set up kiosk terminals for self-service in the production facilities
- Enabled unattended, remote installation and updates of kiosk terminals
- Integrated EIC functionality with the SAP NetWeaver® Portal component

#### Why SAP

- Standardization and harmonization of HR processes
- Delivery of key HR functionality such as the EIC

#### Benefits

- Significant cost savings and reduced workload in HR
- Wide acceptance by shop-floor staff due to ease of use
- Excellent foundation for employee communication on a larger scale across the entire corporation

#### Existing Environment

- SAP ERP
- SAP ERP Human Capital Management solution



ABB AG, headquartered in Mannheim, Germany, is a subsidiary of ABB Ltd., which ranks among the world's leading providers of power and automation technologies. In Germany, ABB operates 33 sites – with more than 5,000 shop-floor employees who don't have access to computers or e-mail. In the past, the majority of these employees were largely cut off from the HR information flow. Printed employee magazines and bulletin boards provided only limited remedies; key information often failed to make it down to the shop floor. Labor data, on the other hand, had to be tediously gathered by local HR departments and communicated through paper-based processes. ABB was looking for a cost-effective solution that would enable HR self-services, close the information gaps to the shop-floor staff, and centralize HR processes.

## Global Initiative for HR Transformation

Within the framework of the corporate initiative "One Simple ABB," the company's HR department was looking for ways to streamline and standardize HR processes. Following an in-depth analysis, ABB decided to globally standardize its HR processes on its existing SAP® ERP application. ABB also wanted to leverage this industry-standard platform for consolidating its HR services through a central shared services center and for introducing the SAP Employee Self-Service application in order to largely automate the HR information flow.

"The first goal of our initiative was to handle the bulk of all HR-related requests and inquiries via self-services,"

notes Jan-Christoph Schüler, HR manager at ABB Germany. "We wanted to overcome the drawbacks of paper-based processes; these are inevitably time-consuming and error prone. The second goal was to provide our shop-floor staff with access to key information – particularly via the corporate intranet."

## Self-Service Terminals to Connect the Shop Floor

At ABB Germany, a substantial share of the shop-floor staff had no access to computers or e-mail. For that reason the company decided to set up kiosk terminals from Wincor Nixdorf International GmbH in its production facilities. These terminals enable shop-floor staff members to enter labor data and to

instantly retrieve information via the SAP NetWeaver® Portal component. In addition, HR personnel were expected to be able to answer any remaining questions via a centrally managed HR service center. Employees can access the service center via the corporate intranet, the corporate portal, and by phone.

To enable the HR service center to operate at the highest levels of efficiency and quality, ABB Germany opted to implement the employee interaction center (EIC) functionality found in SAP ERP. The EIC is, in essence, a ticketing system that analyzes and clusters e-mail messages addressed to the HR department and then routes these messages to the appropriate recipients. At ABB Germany, it is also used for the purposes of HR quality management. "The employee interaction center provides extremely valuable data, for example, on the type and number of requests processed in our HR department, which we used to continuously improve our service levels," states Schüler.

## Unique Challenges

The implementation of the HR solution at ABB Germany was facilitated by the fact that SAP ERP was already in use at all sites. However, a number of unique challenges had to be overcome. The first challenge was to set up the SAP NetWeaver Portal, which provides the user interface for SAP Employee Self-Service and makes it accessible on the shop floor. While Wincor Nixdorf



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supplied a kiosk system complete with terminals. The consulting partner IBM Consulting helped implement the SAP NetWeaver Portal and integrated it with the kiosk system.

The second major challenge was to make the EIC, which was originally developed only for e-mail requests, available via the self-service terminals to shop-floor employees who didn't possess an e-mail address. Experts from SAP Consulting created a custom interface to link the EIC with the Wincor Nixdorf kiosk terminals, allowing terminal users to send messages and requests to the central HR service center.

“Our shop-floor employees appreciate the fact that they are now fully integrated and that they can easily access information that is of vital interest to them.”

Jan-Christoph Schüler, HR Manager, ABB AG

The third challenge was to comply with regulations regarding the confidentiality of sensitive data through mechanisms such as user authentication. To overcome this challenge, the Wincor Nixdorf terminals leverage the existing role-based security functionality in SAP ERP as well as other proven security features such as employee badges.

### Smooth Rollout Promotes Acceptance

The entire rollout, including system setup and installation plus implementation of the shop-floor kiosk terminals, was completed in just a few days. To support a smooth rollout, Wincor Nixdorf furnished a set of routines for the remote installation of the necessary software on the kiosk terminals. And they did so without requiring the physical presence of a technician. Following completion of the remote installation on a single kiosk terminal, the same installation was simply replicated for the other terminals – allowing the company to perform any future installations of terminals or updates remotely in unattended mode.

Parallel to the technical rollout, the company developed a multipronged concept to ensure broad acceptance of the SAP Employee Self-Service application. “The success of a project that involves sensitive personnel data hinges on the support of all stakeholders, including shop-floor workers, the works council, and management,” explains Schüler.

After a successful initial pilot project that involved 40 employees, ABB Germany took the next steps to enhance awareness and pave the way for the large-scale deployment of the kiosk solution based on SAP Employee Self-Service. A road show was launched that demonstrated the solution to staff at all sites and offered users the opportunity to gather hands-on experience.

“Initially, there were concerns that workers might find these terminals difficult to use. However, buying a train ticket from a vending machine is a lot more challenging than using our intuitive kiosk terminals,” says Schüler.

Special emphasis was put on supporting new users at all channels. A total of 800 out of 1,000 managers and supervisors attended the four-hour interactive classroom trainings in the use and benefits of SAP Employee Self-Service. In addition to providing a user guide with step-by-step instructions, Schüler and his team trained 120 key users who provide first-level support to nearly 11,000 coworkers right on the shop floor.

“We are very happy with the way the kiosk terminals have been accepted. In the first three months since the rollout, the vast majority of shop-floor workers have logged on to the system. Ease of use is absolutely imperative in order to ensure sustained acceptance of our SAP Employee Self-Service application,” underscores Schüler. “Our shop-floor employees appreciate the fact that they are now fully integrated and that they can easily access information that is of vital interest to them.”

### Delivering on Expectations

SAP Employee Self-Service has supplied ABB Germany with a number of significant improvements in the HR arena, including major gains in productivity and responsiveness. HR administration effort and costs have been reduced

considerably. Further cost savings have been achieved through the push-button retrieval of information and documents such as pension reports – eliminating paper handling and mailing costs.

The elimination of paper-based processes has improved information transfer speed as well as quality. The staff members can quickly and easily retrieve current personal information – such as payments and benefits as well as data on time management and career development – via the corporate intranet. And, last but not least, the ease of use and transparency provided by the SAP Manager Self-Service and SAP Employee Self-Service applications contribute to making ABB the employer of choice for skilled staff. “SAP Employee Self-Service marks a quantum leap. Shop-floor workers can now access the corporation’s electronic information channels, including the intranet, and are fully integrated with HR processes.” explains Schüler.

### Enhancing Terminal Functionality Beyond HR

Building on the success and experience gathered at ABB Germany, ABB subsidiaries in Brazil, China, India, and Switzerland are next in line to implement SAP Employee Self-Service. Meanwhile, Schüler and his team are exploring ways to expand the new platform with functionality and services beyond those for HR. “Naturally, it’s important to provide standard portal functionality to enable changes to banking data or addresses or to create applications for leave,” says Schüler. “However, to encourage workers to use the terminals, we plan to enhance the functionality by adding features such as flexitime account management, electronic personnel record keeping, and stock purchasing. HR processes are only the beginning. This solution offers potential for meeting the company’s employee communication needs on a larger scale.”

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