

IT Service Management

Standardised processes in a global company

As part of a comprehensive programme to introduce standardised processes, Wacker Chemie opted for an integrated tool for its IT service management, making a significant contribution toward the consolidation of its application landscape. Its IT operations can now be controlled uniformly, and isolated applications are largely a thing of the past.

The Munich-based German chemicals group, Wacker, operates globally with production sites in Europe, North America and Asia. The information technology division at Wacker positions itself as a purely internal service provider, the IT structures largely having evolved autonomously at each of the production sites to meet needs as they arose. With the exception of ERP applications and communication platforms, there were very few central applications in the IT service management environment until recently.

It was only when the company's networks and computer centres were reorganised and consolidated some years ago that the necessity to introduce global structures in IT also became apparent. At the time the company was also introducing a worldwide standardised client architecture and software distribution for its more than 12,000 end users. Based on the support processes for desktop management the company began to align all its processes to the de facto ITIL® standard. It was less a question of increasing the already high process maturity,

Headquarters of Wacker Chemie in Munich, Germany



so much as integrating all IT-relevant procedures on the basis of a shared control platform.

Many of the applications for the network and client management had already been in use for many years and few of them were connected through interfaces. This meant that a universal change and configuration management could not be introduced. A modern, integrated application suite would now help to support all newly introduced ITIL processes whilst removing any barriers between head office, subsidiaries and production sites in different countries, not to mention between the various fields of technology. With the IBM Tivoli Service Request Manager (TSRM) – formerly “Maximo”, as the application is still referred to at Wacker – the choice fell in favour of a high-performance suite which would initially be used with reserve capacity.

Integrated tool passes the field test

In early 2008 work began on the development of a first prototype with assistance from MATERNA. Wacker had chosen the change management process in its infrastructure for this purpose, since it was not yet tool-supported and therefore presented itself as ideal for a pilot test. Crucial, however, to its acceptance by management and staff at Wacker Chemie was a function which did not belong to the standard features of the TSRM: Single Sign On, where users are required to log on once only, without the need to re-enter passwords for every application used. “Without Single Sign On, it won’t be accepted” – it was as simple as that. With the active support of Wacker specialists and IBM developers MATERNA finally succeeded in providing the function and this formed the basis of confidence for an effective collaboration.

“We are very pleased with our choice of implementation partner, because we can work on equal terms. Our specialists have exchanged a multitude of ideas with the experts at MATERNA,” reports Stefan Propst, ITSM program manager at Wacker. MATERNA’s consultation services were not limited to the technical functions of the TSRM, they also looked at the conceptional aspect, focussing on the interests and needs of Wacker throughout. The MATERNA consultants were able

The company

Wacker Chemie AG develops and produces for all global key industries, operating in the fields of silicon and polymer chemicals, specialty and fine chemicals, polysilicium production and semiconductor technology. With a global network of production sites, the company is represented in all key regions. 15,600 employees on five continents work locally to develop innovative solutions with maximum benefit and create synergy effects for efficient cooperation.

to draw not only on their own consulting methodology, Service Excellence, but also on their extensive experience in IT service management and ITIL from previous projects.

When the change management processes successfully went live in the tool, the go-ahead was given for the first real switchover: one year after the decision to go for the TSRM, the ten-year history of the legacy client asset management application, CLASS, came to an end.

Following this second success, the project team felt armed to embark on replacing the first global application with the TSRM. The processes of incident management and service request management now took centre stage; in other words the central tool of the service desk. Wacker Chemie operates this support structure worldwide from three locations: in its main production facility in Burghausen for Europe, in the USA and in China. “For this reason we drew up an international support process and implemented the user interface in the tool completely in English,” explains Manfred Rittel, project team leader for IT service management at Wacker. As of 1 November 2009 the TSRM for the service desk is in use worldwide and helps in the handling of almost 90,000 tickets per year.

The taste of success

It is clear that the TSRM has established itself at the Wacker Group for projects in 2010. Now that its practical suitability has been demonstrated, the focus has moved to useful add-ons and improvements. So, with support from MATERNA, Wacker intends to implement a self-service portal with an integrated IT

Practical tips

“Processes with no maturity to speak of will not get any better in a tool. It is worth first improving the maturity of the processes and then introducing the tool. At Wacker we saw that the ease with which something could be changed in the tool can quickly swing the other way. You also have to consider carefully how changes to a generic system can affect future updates. It is also very important to include people early on in a project like this if you want them to accept it.”

Stefan Propst, Global Helpdesk & Processes, ITSM Program Manager,
Wacker Chemie AG



product catalogue for all 12,000 users by the end of the year 2010. Furthermore, migration onto the newest TSRM, version 7.2, will enable users to benefit from the tool's significantly broader range of standard functions. Additionally, a CMDB project to develop a companywide valid data model and reproduce it in TSRM is about to be finalised. From the end of the year the new version will be available to tackle the issue of reconciliation.

Standardised and clear structures

The main advantage of the TSRM for Wacker Chemie is that it now has a standardised system for accessing the entire IT infrastructure. Even if the TSRM itself is not a monitoring tool, monitoring data can nevertheless be integrated and displayed on dashboards at all locations worldwide as key performance indicators (KPIs). This opens up new possibilities in the IT operating control system and in reporting. “The fact that we have replaced several proprietary legacy systems and consolidated them in an integrated system means comprehensive monitoring and reporting are possible for the first time. Further consolida-

tions are to follow. A convenient side-effect is that we can now avoid switching between media,” reports Manfred Rittel.

Processes are always more important than the tool

Wacker has always placed high demands on its IT service management. The maturity of the processes was already very high: “The existing processes were already very highly developed and this made the project all the more complex. All we needed was continuity and integration into the legacy systems. We have now accomplished this together with MATERNA and transferred the high process maturity into the tool,” explains Stefan Propst.

The new system is efficient, performant and stable, meeting the high expectations of Wacker Chemie. And whilst the number of tasks in the service desk has increased significantly, the TSRM has drastically cut – in some cases halved – the lead times. It paid off that the process landscape was always the focus of attention. ■

Technology

- IT service management suite: IBM Tivoli Service Request Manager 6.2.4 (formerly Maximo)
- Database: Oracle 10
- Application server: Oracle WebLogic 9
- Server operating system: Windows 2003 server
- Client operating system: Windows XP (with IE6 and IE8)
- Hardware: IBM xSeries 3650, 2 CPUs, 4 GB RAM
- Network load balancing

Advantages of the solution

- Integration of all service processes
- Standardised access and no need to switch between media
- Stronger networking of the IT areas
- Clear and uniform management reporting throughout all IT areas and levels
- Good upgradability of the solution towards CMDB with discovery, release management, enterprise asset management and license management