

COMPUTERWOCHE

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Control is the specialist department's task

Why EnBW has set up a self-service portal for IT services.

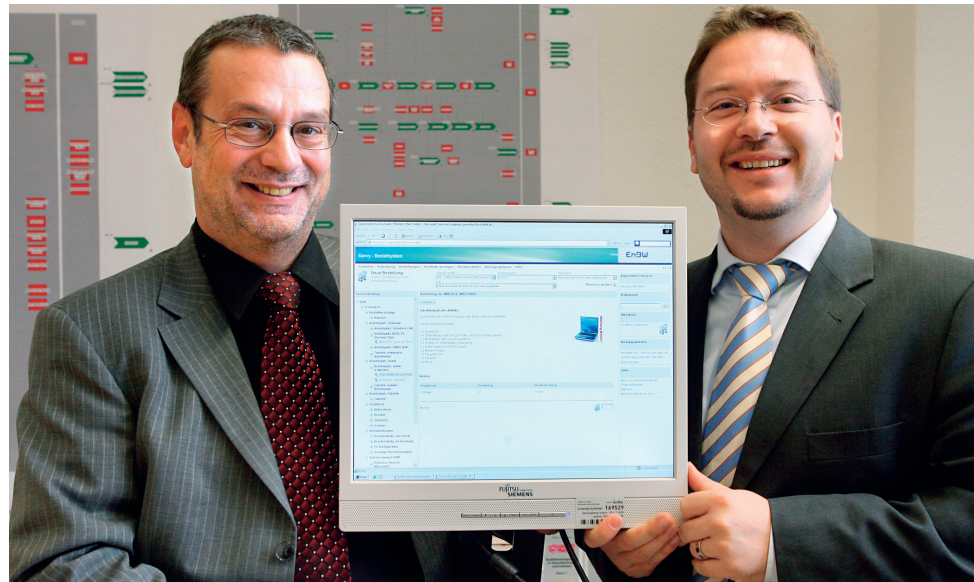
BY CW EDITOR KARIN QUACK

Who gets a new PC or laptop with which software and which access authorisations? It cannot really be the job of IT to sort out this matter. And Rainer Kopf agrees: "We're there to deliver services to the best of our knowledge and ability, but not to define the needs of the companies," explains the Service Manager from EnBW Systeme Infrastruktur Support GmbH (SIS), the internal IT company of Energieversorgung Baden-Württemberg.

This was only one motivation, albeit in Kopf's view a significant one, for the development of the new employee portal that is currently being used by six EnBW companies to organise their IT devices and services. It is based on the "Savvy Suite" of Mannheim-based software supplier syscovery, and serves primarily to deliver extensive automation of the ordering process.

Poor image of IT

Less than a year ago, ordering a "service" (EnBW used this term to describe both hardware and software) from SIS was a rather expensive business. "There was an incredibly large number of paper forms, which were required in various combinations," explains Matthias Mäcke, the



Thanks to the new Self-Service Portal, Rainer Kopf (left) and Matthias Mäcke are now able to focus more on their core responsibility – the provision of IT services for EnBW.

FOTO: ENBW

person responsible for service delivery in Kopf's team. About one dozen people did nothing else all day but receive these forms, check them to make sure they were correct and complete, and request any missing information.

This "ping-pong" procedure with customers gave IT a really bad image, continues Mäcke. Users simply experienced a lot of time passing between their request and the installation of the device or software, but did not know why it was taking so long:

"As a result, IT appeared to lack transparency and was considered to be slow."

In the past around 250 assignments a day were placed in a queue, where they often waited for three days before they were even dealt with. At the same time the complexity of orders increased, as due to company-wide savings less services were being ordered, but those that were ordered were more individual.

To cap it all, as an internal cost centre SIS also had to make sure that it only delivered what the

customer actually needed. This was made even more difficult by the fact that it did not have a decent stock management system: users were constantly passing on used computers to colleagues and other employees without notifying the Infrastructure Department.

The customer knows what he needs

For Kopf and Mäcke, important reasons for the creation of the portal therefore included the outsourcing of stock management and the control function to users. "No one knows better what he needs and what he has than the customer himself," is their reasoning. It would also be perfectly reasonable to let them manage their stocks as well. The plausibility control of orders would also be best delegated to users.

In consultation with those responsible for security, authorisation workflows were agreed with the individual companies, in order to integrate them automatically into the software. SIS had already compiled its range of products and services in a service catalogue. Subsets were defined from these for each of the companies. Employees can then make their selections from these lists.

The cost centre decides

Each order now passes first of all to the person responsible for the cost centre. Here a decision is made on authorisation and the delivery is initiated. It is transparent to the orderer where his request is at any given time. "This has really improved our image," says a delighted Mäcke. This method also saves money: "Accurate stock records mean that duplicate or incorrect orders are avoided."

The improvement in the process speed is evident above all in software orders. When control and approval proceed quickly, as is facilitated by a system of depu-

ties, it is possible to install a new application on the desktop within one hour of the order being placed.

At present around 50 per cent of services are being provided without manual intervention. At present the user authorisation processes still require intervention. According to Kopf, SIS is holding around 25,000 individual authorisations. In order to get the administration of these under control, in the next year a new module of the Savvy Suite will be implemented. Using "Entitled Management" (EM), roll-based authorisation concepts can be implemented and new employees can automatically be released for all applications, triggered by an entry in SAP HR.

"Fire and Forget" did not work

EnBW came across the software from Mannheim through the designed implementation partner Hewlett-Packard (HP). When the software was chosen, around the end of 2003/beginning of 2004, the market was virtually dominated by products using the "Fire and Forget" principle, which meant that stock data was not retained, according to the two EnBW managers. Furthermore, the SAP "E-Procure" function did not support asset management.

According to Mäcke, in-house development was out of the question. In his view, a company that produces individual software has to accept a suboptimum even at the system delivery stage, which will become even worse if work does not continue on it constantly. "The manufacturer continues to develop standard software," he confirms.

HP then mentioned Savvy Suite almost in passing. syscovery was able to point to a reference customer in ABB that had experienced almost the same problems as EnBW. HP took care of implementing the tools.

Project profile

Type of project: self-service portal for order management in IT.

Sector: energy supplier.

Scope: for ten companies with a total of 14,000 users.

Duration: from beginning of 2004 until end of 2006.

Current status: core module implemented in seven out of eight companies, organisation and authorisation management to follow.

Objective: outsourcing of procurement control in the companies, stock transparency, automation of the ordering process.

Result: cost saving from quicker processes, greater transparency, improved image of IT.

Product: "Savvy Suite" from

syscovery based on .NET
Service provider: Hewlett-Packard.

Integration with MS systems

As well as the acceptable price, another factor in favour of Savvy Suite was the fact that it is based on Microsoft's .NET platform. This simplified integration with the Microsoft systems used by EnBW. Implementation of the portal is almost complete. Around 8,900 users are already using it. SIS does not intend to implement the Invoice components: the order process is initiated from SAP's SD module, which Savvy Suite accesses via XI.

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