Gaining More Efficiency with Precise Processes

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Thorsten Völz,
CEO of Primus
Präzisionstechnik GmbH & Co. KG

**Case Study
Primus
Präzisionstechnik**

agilesWorkflow

Microsoft Dynamics NAV

Most people take little notice when the mill of the coffee machine rotates or the convertible roof disappears in the rear as if by magic. Hardly anyone gives a thought to what happens behind the scenes.

This is different when we look at the German manufacturer Primus. The company is specialized in precise drive technology which is commonly found e. g. in kitchen appliances. Primus mainly operates based on classical contract manufacturing.

When it comes to developing new products or to improving existing ones, the employees of Primus make sure that the customer is already involved at an early stage. Finally, it is one of the company's strengths to quickly empathize with different tasks and to develop cost-effective solutions in a timely manner. "Special customer demands are always a challenge which we approach with passionate commitment. Thanks to short decision-making paths and a streamlined project management, we can also complete ambitious projects," says Thorsten Völz, CEO at Primus.

Since its founding more than 30 years ago, the company has constantly grown, with approx. 80 employees today. In 2008, Primus was able to double its warehouse and administrative capacities. In 2012, it achieved an annual turnover of about 8 million euros.

It starts with Process Analysis

A few years ago, Primus implemented the business solution Microsoft Dynamics NAV. However, the company's processes were too complex to be covered to full extent by the new system. As a result, it was difficult for the employees to always get the right information at the right place. Consequently, it was decided to implement a workflow management system to fill the gaps.

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Thorsten Völz

"Process transparency is important when it comes to increasing productivity in a targeted form. Where do I stand? Where are the others? How far has the process progressed? When can I go on? All these questions need to be answered every day by each employee," emphasizes CEO Völz.

But before Primus could start searching for a suitable workflow management, the company had to do some preparation work: It took the project team, comprised of ten members, nearly two years to analyze and to document the existing processes. "A lot of proven work processes have emerged in the course of time, and not each cus-

tomization and modification has been carefully documented. A software change is a good opportunity to make a clean sweep." CEO Völz: "You can only find the right business software if you know where the journey is heading."

The company finally decided to implement the Microsoft Dynamics NAV add-on called "agilesWorkflow". It was especially the wide range of functionality and flexibility of this tool which finally convinced the German manufacturer. Thanks to agilesWorkflow, the company was able to cover its legacy structures in detail and without concessions.
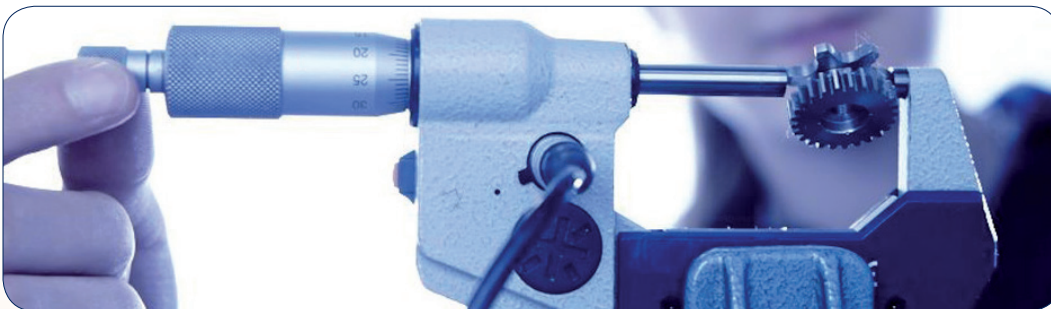
Circle measurement on a gear wheel

Workflow Management as Add-On

The implementation of the agilesWorkflow tool started in early 2010. From the technical point of view, it was ready to use within one day. Another two days were required for the project team to train the employees.

Primus established the complex structure of its business processes on its own. However, as a medium-sized company it was not possible for Primus to free up capacities on a permanent basis. So this extra work had

to be done in addition to the daily tasks. It took the project team less than six months to establish the key business processes in the first phase. CEO Völz remembers: "With agilesWorkflow, we were able to model our organization in a fairly accurate way. And for the first time, we had a real overview of our process landscape". To ensure a high level of automation, most processes are initiated for certain events automatically by Microsoft Dynamics NAV. The workflows partly consist of multiple interconnected task chains.

An example: If an employee creates a new item, various departments are busy with gathering the required information. Primus currently has around 7,000 items in its portfolio. Therefore, transparency is a crucial factor.

agilesWorkflow – Horizontal add-on for Microsoft Dynamics NAV

agilesWorkflow meets all specific requirements of the most diverse industries, working with highly flexible setups avoiding costly programming.
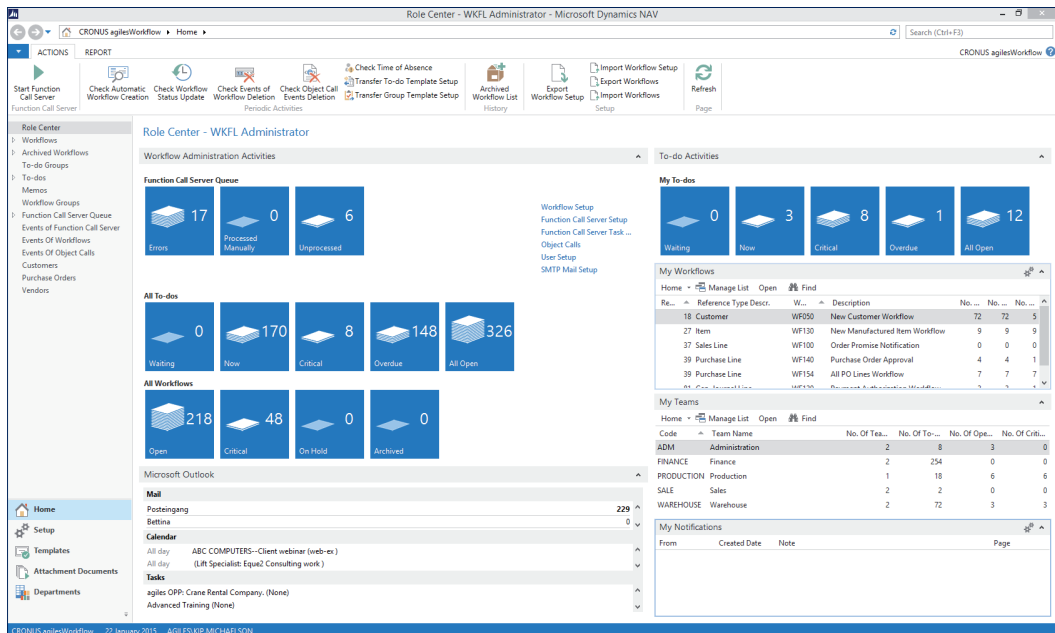
Role Centers in agilesWorkflow, based on Microsoft Dynamics NAV

Völz: "In various industries, such as in the Automotive or Medical Technology sector, the requirements for process documentation and quality management are very high. This way, a simple part like a washer unexpectedly gains a very special meaning." There are similarly detailed processes for change management or for customer and supplier audits in the commercial area.

"agilesWorkflow is extremely flexible which, of course, suits us very well. But process management is a complex matter. If you have nothing to do with it for a longer time, everything is fine. But if you start dealing with process management again, you may find it hard to get into it. But we can always rely on our partner agiles Informationssysteme who supports us in terms of ongoing changes and modifications," adds Völz.

More Insight into the Process Landscape

Völz is fully content with the progress and results of the project: "We have finally established a real structure in our processes. agilesWorkflow combines the individual business areas and provides an unified way of work. Thus, we
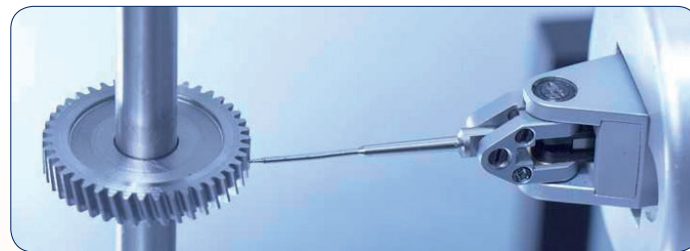
Gear shape measurement on a measuring machine

can guarantee a consistently high quality." Routing slips or votes on call now belong to the past.

Another important factor is the resulting transparency. Especially the implementation of product changes may take several weeks at Primus. Today, the company is able to view the current status of a process at any time. However, there are still a number of operations and processes which are not covered yet by the add-on agilesWorkflow.

Völz: "Today, we do not only know more about our processes, we are also much faster in key areas, such as in the area of documentation. At the same time, we are able to ensure a consistently high quality". From his point of view, this is an important cornerstone to cope with the volume of work in the future which is tending to rise – without having to increase the number of employees significantly."

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Customer Profile

The German company Primus Precision GmbH & Co. KG is specialized in precision drive technology – today with approx. 80 employees. As a contract manufacturer, the company closely works with customers of different industries, such as Medical Technology, Automotive, or Consumer Electronics. In 2012, it achieved an annual turnover of about 8 million euros.

Programming on a machining center

Initial Situation

After the introduction of the business software Microsoft Dynamics NAV, some of the company's processes turned out to be too complex to be completely covered by the new software. Primus searched for a flexible workflow management system to manage its business processes more efficiently.

Solution

Primus decided to implement agilesWorkflow, an add-on solution for Microsoft Dynamics NAV. The decisive factors were the integration into the business software as well as the wide range of functionality and flexibility of this tool.

Benefits

With agilesWorkflow, Primus was able to cover all key operations and processes. Today, the company benefits from a uniform way of work with a consistently high quality. Furthermore, it takes the employees noticeably less time to do important tasks like documentation work.

See our website for more information about agilesWorkflow on Microsoft Dynamics NAV: www.agilesWorkflow.com

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