

## Increased productivity due to cutting-edge enterprise software



**KIND**

DAS GANZE LEBEN HÖREN

Established in 1952, KIND Hörgeräte GmbH & Co. KG is the undisputed leader in hearing aid sales in the German market.

“Our goal was not to throw everything overboard; we wanted to optimize proven processes. For example, our cross-department work processes are standard today but could not have been implemented using our former system,” explains IT Area Manager Paul Themann. KIND worked with the mainframe system IBM AS/400 for many years.

Business applications covered financial accounting and order processing, but were connected only rudimentarily via interfaces. The decision-makers were hesitant to replace the system because some processes had been individualized to a great extent. When support for the old system became increasingly difficult to come by, they knew it was time to take action.

## Criteria

The selection of the most suitable ERP system was made in early 2009: KIND decided in favor of the Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP system mainly because it fit perfectly into the company's system landscape. KIND expected the Microsoft solution to facilitate smooth system integration. Other aspects that played into the decision included the new system's objectoriented architecture and its flexibility and scalability. KIND entrusted Hitachi Solutions with implementing the solution because it had worked with the Nurembergbased Microsoft Partner on previous projects and appreciated its reliable implementation of complex IT projects.

## Solution

To avoid losing orientation in view of the numerous adjustments required, the project team placed great value on the deployment of a structured methodology. A customized variation of Microsoft's standard implementation method, Sure Step, was used for the analysis, documentation and implementation. "Mapping the full width and depth of every single process is crucial," says Themann. "It is the only way to prevent unforeseen things from happening when you turn a screw." An example of the industry-specific features is the hearing aid sales: in general, several invoices must be written for every order – for the health insurer, the private complementary insurance company, the affected trade association, and the customer. If a hearing device is returned, this process must be completed in full in reverse. Since no standard enterprise software accommodates these requirements, adjustments became necessary.

## Results

KIND has been operating with Dynamics AX since May 2011 and currently has the software installed at approx. 250 workstations. The systems in the stores are linked via the Microsoft BizTalk Server integration platform. Another link has been installed to the Microsoft Share-Point Server portal system which is used mainly as an intranet and document management solution. The project team achieved the most progress in the area of enterprise resource planning: KIND now can draw on transparent information and reliable figures.

Having unified data enhances communication and coordination significantly and helps reduce workloads. "We plan to extend Dynamics AX into customer management," says Themann as a final note.

"Being able to rely on the figures regarding our inventory has allowed us to reduce our stock significantly," Themann rejoices. "Our staff needs less time for order picking or processing service requirements so our productivity has increased many times over."

Paul Themann,  
IT Area Manager at KIND Hörgeräte

## About KIND Hörgeräte GmbH & Co. KG

Established in 1952, KIND Hörgeräte GmbH & Co. KG is the undisputed leader in hearing aid sales in the German market. The company owes its success to its large portfolio of products ranging from regular hearing assistance devices to customized high-tech models. KIND has approximately 543 stores throughout Germany and 14 branches in the rest of Europe and beyond. The company employs close to 2,700 people.



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