

IFS seamlessly unites multiple global sales and production operations across six countries for Jakob AG



IFS Cloud is streamlining complex multi-country sales and production operations for Jakob AG, ensuring accuracy, increasing visibility, and saving time and cost across the business.

International Expansion

For several years, the Swiss-based family-owned company had been reliant on its proprietary system that was not originally created for intercompany transactions. Faced with continued expansion and increasing order volumes for its manufacturing facilities in Switzerland (Trubschachen) and Vietnam (Saigon), the company took the decision to look for a new ERP solution. Explains Matthias Feierabend, CFO for Jakob AG, “Our international operation poses many administrative challenges. It means we require excellent communication, real-time visibility of orders and efficient planning for supply chain logistics.

“We knew we required a robust enterprise-grade solution to deliver the quality and capability we needed. After reviewing IFS and other vendors, by summer 2020 it was clear that IFS Cloud was the way forward for us.”

Following a 18-month implementation project by IFS partner Arcwide, the first site to go live with IFS Cloud was the Vietnam factory on July 1st 2022, with the USA sales operation following on October 1st. Implementations for the Switzerland production site and sales offices in Austria, Germany and France will roll-out from January 2023.

“By launching and testing the solution sequentially in one production and one sales environment first, our IFS implementation partner Arcwide was able to ensure the roll-out across the other sites would be seamless,” says Feierabend. “As we only have an internal IT team of three, we relied on Arcwide and IFS to ensure the system would add the most business value to our processes. This ability of IFS to deliver major and complex international implementation projects through trusted partners was also a major attraction for us when choosing the system,” he adds.

About Jakob AG

Founded in 1904 Jakob AG is an international supplier of traditional rope and rope net products as well as technical applications, fabrics, fastenings and accessories for worldwide applications in the fields of architecture and rope & lifting technology.

The company operates sales offices in the US, Austria, Germany and France and manufacturing facilities in Switzerland and Vietnam.



About Arcwide

Arcwide delivers a truly end-to-end transformation service which includes pre-deployment scoping and business readiness, plus systems implementation and ongoing managed services. Arcwide’s key difference is the combination of services associated with business transformation, such as training and change management, as part of systems integration. Within this unique, all-inclusive service, Arcwide implements IFS solutions, plus third-party technology embedded into IFS Cloud solutions, while simultaneously tracking value throughout the entire project and beyond.



Optimizing Configure to Order

Architects placing orders for Jakob's architectural ropes and rope systems have unique specifications for each building project, meaning there are no 'standard' product options. "Our specialty is that everything we produce is typically a customized order," says Feierabend. "Unlike our competitors, who ship a standard product that must then be cut to size for a building or structure, we fabricate a fully-finished, custom-sized item that arrives ready for the customer to simply install."

Delivering individually customized products requires the information for each customer order to be transferred accurately between a country sales site in the US, Austria, Germany or France, Jakob's engineering and production team in Switzerland, and Jakob's manufacturing operation in Vietnam.

By registering all order configuration information into a shared IFS workflow group-wide, IFS Cloud has eliminated the need for re-keying or data re-entry into separate systems in each location. Adds Feierabend, "Now, at the point of configuring an order, all the technical information is immediately captured, stored and shared throughout production in a consistent format. We've been able to achieve this mostly using just the standard finance and production capabilities available within IFS."

The standard Configure to Order capability within IFS Cloud has been modified to support every component within one configuration, allowing the creation and transmission of unique specifications for each sales order. Configuration data is imported from Excel, with all configuration IDs automatically generated at the push of a button.

"We have 30 salespeople globally. Once we have IFS live across all our divisions, I expect the system will save each at least half an hour per day"

Matthias Feierabend, CFO, Jakob AG

Significant Efficiency Savings

All the information flows required to produce orders, including those that may need to be shipped between the two manufacturing sites before delivery, are captured and stored within a single instance of IFS Cloud and passed through the chain. No other external systems, documents or emails are required.

With the company processing 80-100 orders a day, minor configurations to the system have enabled working in IFS overviews, allowing batches of 20 orders to be processed at a time, saving time and minimizing clicks.



Feierabend expects the overall efficiency savings to be significant. “With IFS now optimizing our operations, customers benefit both from world-class engineering capability in Switzerland, and highly cost-efficient manufacturing capabilities in Vietnam. Once we have IFS live across all our divisions, I expect the system will save every Jakob salesperson at least half an hour per day,” he says.

Reliable Performance, Intuitive Usability

With different time zones between the multiple sites worldwide, 24-hour system reliability is essential. “The central system in Switzerland can now be accessed from every site using standard internet connectivity,” says Feierabend.

Feierabend also finds the multicurrency capabilities within IFS working well. “We have the Vietnam Dong and, in countries where the U.S. dollar is not the main currency, we have established it as parallel currency,” he explains. “This makes it very easy to create consolidated financial statements. Invoice handling is also automated within IFS, creating further efficiencies.”

In terms of usability, Feierabend reports his staff find the system fast and intuitive. “Moving around between screens is easy, and the system responsiveness is good,” he says. Feierabend also welcomes the ability for advanced users to directly access and search IFS ERP data directly through tables. “I think IFS Lobbies and the visualization capabilities are most useful for certain repetitive tasks,” he says.

Implementation Advice

Feierabend recognizes the challenges of driving digital transformation and IT across multiple geographies. “For a successful IFS implementation, it’s important for international companies or groups to have a senior decision maker in the project team who is prepared to be decisive. With complex projects like this, speed and clarity are essential to get the necessary work done, and any new business process changes introduced.”

Moment of Service™

How does Feierabend think that customers will benefit from Jakob AG’s decision to use IFS? “Firstly, IFS will mean that we can remain very cost competitive. Secondly, within the next 12-24 months, we are looking at using the system to power an online self-service configuration tool, so that customers can initially enter their own specification and submit it to us for review,” he says.



Find out more

Further information, e-mail info@ifs.com, contact your local IFS office or visit our web site, ifs.com



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