



# SUCCESS STORY

## MERZ UPS EFFICIENCY THANKS TO PORTAL



The pharmaceutical industry is one of the most knowledge-intensive industries. For companies from this sector, efficient knowledge management and smooth teamwork among employees are of great significance in staying competitive and keeping pace with a market in constant flux. To join together employees, information and processes, Merz Pharmaceuticals has put its trust in structured knowledge management and efficient information structures based on SAP systems.

In order to stay competitive on an international basis, companies have to adopt flexible systems for high-speed access and convenient sharing of data. They are therefore constantly searching for ways of coping with the flood of information and with difficulties in locating data from different sources, as well as seeking to make teamwork efficient.

As of late 2004, research and development employees at Merz Pharmaceuticals have been using an employee portal based on SAP NetWeaver Portal (SAP EP). Merz aims thus at providing its employees with a uniform platform to exchange and transfer knowledge.

*"This is incredibly important, in particular in the area of research," says Gabriela Billig, project manager for the employee portal at Merz Pharmaceuticals. "In this sector, up to 700 substances have to be screened in order for one agent to be approved. The approval process for a new agent can take up to ten years. The research papers, studies, data and files needed for the approval process may fill an entire truck. That's why efficient and structured knowledge management and flawless teamwork are vital."*

### Research requires a lot of literature — that's why the trick is ...

Usually a company's data and information is stored in a number of systems. At Merz, for instance, reports on internal research results are stored in the document management system, and literature, research papers and scientific works in an internal library data base from Star. In addition, literature searches naturally also draw on external sources on the Internet such as MedLine. Previously, every different data source had to be searched individually, costing time and effort. The portal makes this significantly faster and easier. For us it means joining the world of efficient information.

### ... finding instead of to searching

Around 100 employees from Merz Pharmaceuticals research and development have now been working with the portal since its introduction in December 2004. The portal provides them with access to the extensive internal library and enables them to search for documents. The portal's knowledge management system integrates the various data sources and provides the Merz Pharmaceuticals employees with access to the information contained therein.

It also supports structuring information and making it available to the relevant target groups. The search engine TRex supports a full-text search of information from several data repositories. All documents found are displayed for the user together with their source — for instance, whether the information is found in the existing data base, in the document management system or on the Internet, since the search engine also integrates online information services. Internal documents can be authorized for access by specific employees or by all users. Employees can also subscribe to documents. This means they are automatically sent all updated or new documents on a specified topic. Users can configure this function for themselves or for other employees.

### Room for teamwork

The portal helps Merz Pharmaceuticals optimize not only the flow of information, but also teamwork among the employees. Teamwork in so-called Collaboration Rooms is the company's way of accelerating information-sharing between employees engaged on the same project. A team of around ten Merz Pharmaceuticals employees were engaged in the pilot phase of such virtual collaboration. A shared virtual environment enabled the employees to access all applications and contents supported by the portal. The team 'met' in virtual project meetings, generated and discussed solutions and results, decided on tasks and set deadlines. This has helped optimize discussion threads for test reports, for example. Participants 'monitored' the latest project developments — on their monitors. It made it easy for

team members to keep constant track of who added a test criterion, and when and why they did so. *"It means that teamwork on research projects can be improved significantly and reaches a higher level by becoming independent of time and place,"* says Billig.

### Making knowledge available

Freudenberg IT (FIT) oversaw the implementation of the project. The IT service provider was in charge of consulting, implementation and also technical project management. FIT was incorporated in the terms of the tender, as "Special Expertise Partner" for SAP NetWeaver and due to its various outstanding reference projects for company and employee portals. *"Apart from the FIT portal expertise, it was their coherent design that convinced us,"* says Billig. By as early as July 2004, FIT had built the pilot for the employee portal, carried out the consulting and trained the staff. The portal went live in December 2004. The different system environments had to be integrated to provide for centralized access to information from existing data bases and from a variety of archiving solutions.

The biggest challenge here proved to be integrating the existing Star data base into the employee portal. The library data base had to be connected to the portal via the Star XML interface.

### Step-by-Step expansion

Merz Pharmaceuticals wanted the employee portal to be available to all of its approximately 400 employees by the end of 2005. The next step for the company

was to optimize processes, for instance by implementing a workflow management and integrating further SAP systems — such as SAP Business Warehouse. In addition, the portal has been expanded to connect external service providers collaborating with the company on research and projects. Finally, the portal has been expanded further to encompass all employees of the Merz Pharma Group.

### Merz Pharmaceuticals Profile

Based in Frankfurt/Main, Merz Pharmaceuticals GmbH is an innovative pharmaceutical company focusing on research and marketing of drugs for the treatment of neurological and psychiatric illnesses. The company plays a leading role in the area of Alzheimer research and is also active in the indication areas of dermatology and metabolic disorders. Merz Pharmaceuticals GmbH is one of three subsidiaries of Merz Pharma. Merz Pharma employs approximately 1,150 employees around the world and in the financial year 2007-2008 achieved sales of € 610 million.

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