

13 times faster and 16 times more often updated documents for all pet animals

„Vitakraft. For the love of pets.“ is the guiding principle behind the Corporate Philosophy and Policy of one of the most successful enterprises in the pet care business. Originally a small trading company for animal feed located near Bremen, the company has since developed into the worldwide market leader for household pet products and has 20 sales and distribution companies in Europe, Asia and America.

Developing and manufacturing high-quality products for species-specific nutritional needs and the care and welfare of pets is the highest priority at Vitakraft. Taking the latest scientific research findings into account, the animal foodstuff specialist produces innovative products and assortment of goods tailored to meet the specific needs of household pets. The products are manufactured in numerous production plants both at home and abroad.

Today, more than 2,000 Vitakraft products ensure – optimum nutrition for birds, dogs, cats and small animals such as rabbits, mice, guinea pigs and gerbils. Their wide product range comprises both pet foods, supplements and treats, as well as accessories for the care and well-being of all household pets. And the product range is continuously being adapted to meet needs: No matter whether accessories and toys for dogs and cats, or new, improved foodstuff formulations for birds and small animals – by continuously further developing their product range, the company ensures that they will still maintain their leading market position in diverse product segments in the future.

Having current catalogue materials when calling on customers, boosts turnover. Viewed from this aspect, at Vitakraft, the product catalogue is of central importance and an accompanying element during sales talks. Well-arran-



ged, nicely illustrated and up-to-date, it particularly serves the sales force/field staff when calling on customers – primarily retail chain stores and pet stores – as an important means of being able to present and visualize new products.

Up until a short time ago, the central Marketing Department at the Bremen headquarters was always busy when it came to updating their product catalogue at least every two years; in time for the most important international trade fair „Interzoo“. The process was carried out almost completely by hand, and was correspondingly resource-intensive and error-prone. Creation time per catalogue generally took six months. Product images and descriptions were

often no longer current by the time the catalogue could finally go to press. Following the next price adjustment, the prices were often no longer up-to-date. Optimizing the process became inevitable to keep up with the growing demands.

We therefore first tackled establishing the basis for improved and central data management of all product-related information. In 2012, with the implementation of the PIM system from Informatica, the foundation was laid and the existing rudimentary data structure in Excel was considerably optimized. This was the prerequisite for the next optimization phase – extensive process automation in the printing process. To

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begin with, based on the existing product catalogue, the German catalogue was to be automated by approx. 80% and created at the push of a button.

During the objective-based evaluation of providers to be considered, InBetween stood out because of their diversified customer references and a

However, this non-recurring time and effort was worth it: The greater part of the contents for the product catalogue, for example, the structure, category texts, etc. could initially be directly configured in PIM. Moreover, a particular highlight was that it was now possible to immediately display the GTIN Identification Number as a barcode for

took a time expenditure of six months, for the first time ever, a catalogue was finished within only 14 days. Whereby, the greatest amount of time was spent by the Marketing Department where the contents were checked. This is equivalent to a generation period that is 13 times faster. As a result, Vitakraft can now publish a current catalogue every three months, and thus respond much more quickly and flexibly to changes in the product range, without needing any further resources.



As an internationally operating company, Vitakraft is naturally thinking ahead: Following the positive experience with the first language version, product catalogues will soon be produced for further sales companies in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Italy and France. They will be published in French, Dutch, Italian and English, and in the same efficient and automated manner. The faster the field staff has catalogues at hand, the faster new products can be successfully placed on all markets, which provides for increased turnover and a higher market share.

license version specially tailored to the requirements. As a reputable and reliable publishing expert, InBetween provided Vitakraft with the guarantee of quickly reducing project costs.

To build the basis for automatically creating the Vitakraft product catalogue, an interface between the data in Informatica PIM and designing the catalogue in InDesign also had to be implemented. This, however, was relatively easy: via an XML export in the format of the given publication and language, it was possible to generate the desired publication at the press of a button. In the end, only the catalogue content and page layouts had to be updated and adapted.

the Shipping Department without any further data acquisition. Another positive effect is that Vitakraft can quickly react to change requests at short notice – a new catalogue with a revised product range structure can be digitally exported – for this purpose, the data structure is only continuously updated in the source system, PIM. Creating the catalogue is now a highly automated process, and only the cover and rear pages are manually added in InDesign.

With the first German catalogue printed at the push of a button, Vitakraft laid a milestone in regard to efficiently creating print materials. In place of the original process of manually publishing a new catalogue every two years, which

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Interview

As a manufacturer and trade company with a large number of customers, is it very important to Vitakraft that the specialist shops invariably have the latest products on stock. Even though electronic information plays an increasingly greater role, it is primarily the job of the qualified field staff/sales force to call customers' attention to newly developed products and to convince them to add them to their product range.

From your point of view, is the traditional product catalogue contemporary, or will it perhaps be replaced by Apps in the medium term?

That quite varied at our place, and depends both on the sales representative and the customer. It goes without saying that our colleagues have also brought along tablets, but there are still many who still rely on catalogues. Particularly the smaller retailers are often not as computer savvy as our major customers.

Our job in Marketing is to provide all the needed and applied media in equal measure.

Which catalogue contents are changed most often?

We normally have a range of new products twice a year. Last year, many changes were additionally necessary when we changed the design of our umbrella brand. This resulted in our having carry out a relaunch for many products. Very often, we also have to either adapt the product images, or would like to use new, prettier product photographs.

From a sales perspective, what are the advantages of regularly updating the catalogue?

Colorful and appealing product images are of utmost importance when selling, and provide for more turnover. Ever since we are in the position of being able to create our catalogues simply at the push of a button, we can immediately take over all new product images. We



Heiko Cichala

has been employed at Vitakraft as an IT Application Consultant since 1999.

Mr. Cichala is responsible for all innovations and adaptations relating to Product Management within the company. Alongside the ongoing interaction with the Marketing Department in regard to adapting and optimizing product data, he also has access to central tools such as SAP Business Workflow and Product Information Management system from Informati-ca.

could now ever create a new product range catalogue every month, which our Sales Department would certainly welcome.

And what about the cost side?

As we generally relay the catalogue in electronic form to our customers – most often in PDF format – print costs are not an issue for us. All the more important, though, is the immense increase in efficiency when creating the catalogues. In comparison, the manual process was far more time-consuming and cost-intensive. Not to mention, the many associated sources of error.



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What aspects of the project implementation were of particular importance to you?

We, as a middle-sized enterprise, prefer orientating ourselves on the market with partners and providers at eye level. InBetween not only presents streamlined and target-oriented project structures in external company representation, but they live them, too. Direct contact to one or two project managers quickly leads to results.

Project Highlights

- Shortened production time and considerably reduced project costs thanks to automatization.
- Important information for shipment can be added without the need to collect additional data.
- Even last-minute change requests can easily be adopted in the catalogue.
- Creation times up to 13 times faster.
- All country and language versions can be accomplished with the same process.
- High degree of automatization of over 80 %.

Vitakraft pet care GmbH & Co. KG

Vitakraft-Werke Wührmann & Sohn GmbH & Co. KG, based in Bremen, is one of the worldwide leading brand-name enterprises in the household pets industry. Since 2013, Vitakraft belongs to the Deurer group of companies and apart from Germany, they are represented in 19 further countries in Europe, Asia and America. Approximately

1,600 employees worldwide make sure that roughly 1.2 million high-quality Vitakraft products for nourishing pets are produced and distributed on a daily basis. More than 5,000 trade partners in more than 50,000 companies the world over, have a wide range of Vitakraft products on stock. Millions of household pet owners can rely on



being able to obtain the best for their pets, anywhere and at any time – providing for a healthy and long life of their dear pets.

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