

TOP QUALITY THANKS TO INTENSIVE COOPERATION VIA SUPPLYON

At Continental Automotive Systems quality management is a constant quantity in all processes. In the area of supplier communication, the entire SupplyOn QM solution portfolio is being brought into play – the Performance Monitor, the Business Directory as well as Project Management and the Problem Solver. The results: minimization of work and expenditure, as well as considerably higher transparency and process reliability.

In all areas of industrial manufacturing it is notable that customer demands made on products and services are constantly rising. The players operating successfully on today's markets will have to deliver perfect quality without compromising. In the automotive supplier industry quality management throughout the supplier chain is of central importance. Guidelines, requirements and certifications are already specified in the general agreements concluded. Jürgen Oberle, Head of Quality Management Business Processes at Continental Automotive Systems: "We expect our suppliers to have quality management systems in place and to also make sure that they live according to their quality philoso-

At Continental Automotive Systems quality is a complex interactive process that demands a high level of information transparency. This can only be realized if central processes are mapped electronically and automated. In handling the data flow to and from the portals of the automobile manufacturers, Continental Automotive Systems has opted for the SAP NetWeaver technology, and thereby for the SAP Exchange Infrastructure (SAP XI), the process integration component within NetWeaver. CAS is managing supplier integration via the SupplyOn collaboration platform. The interaction between the individual SupplyOn QM solutions enables a homogenous foundation of data, which translates as a considerably improved workflow. Moreover, information that is important for all process



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Jürgen Oberle, Head of Quality Management Business Processes
Continental Automotive Systems

phies. Quality management always represents an across-departmental task. When the selection of a new supplier is at hand, for example, the quality assurance, purchasing and development departments work in close coordination."

participants is distributed at a faster pace. Such information can be transformed into measures that subsequently improve quality by a decisive measure.

A salient example is the communication of supplier ratings via the SupplyOn Performance Monitor. The supplier data from the in-house "Supplier Rating System" at Continental Automotive Systems are transferred to the Performance Monitor. In the Performance Monitor suppliers can read their operational ratings and are also able to reduce and analyze these data. The Performance Monitor supports the continuous improvement of supplier quality. "Thanks to this tool, which reflects the data of our in-house rating system, we are able to perceive the problem areas of our suppliers at a very early stage and can take appropriate measures. This entails considerable process improvements," as Jürgen Oberle emphasizes. The supplier response to the deployment of the Performance Monitor is good. The majority of suppliers perceive the application as an opportunity to recognize problems at an early stage and actively work on their solution before there is any escalation: "This is also reflected by the system's access rates. We register that our suppliers regularly access the Performance Monitor, because they view it as a tool enhancing their competitive capabilities."

Certifications and quality advance planning

The SupplyOn Business Directory, the collaboration platform's central supplier index, plays an important role in quality management. It not only contains detailed information on the manufacturing

capabilities of the registered suppliers, but also states details of their quality and environment certificates.

One of the declared aims of Continental Automotive Systems is to intensify and accelerate communication with suppliers already in the development phase. Therefore – and in view of the positive experience gained with the Performance Monitor – Continental is planning the implementation of SupplyOn Project Management in the near future. This solution enables the efficient handling of development projects with partners according to the standardized APQP method (Advanced Product Quality Planning). Based on model cases, projects can be easily structured. Subsequently, the individual elements can be assigned to the responsible project members. On approval, the course of the project can be tracked with the help of status reports. Problems or overruns of deadlines can be immediately visualized by the traffic light function and respective messages triggered. At Continental Automotive Systems the specifications for the deployment of SupplyOn Project Management are currently being drawn up. "We expect that the utilization of this system will translate as considerably leaner and efficient communication in the development phase," states Jürgen Oberle.

SupplyOn Problem Solver represents another key step in the direction of "Zero PPM." This is an online tool for

complaint management according to the 8D method. With the help of the Problem Solver, which is directly linked to the CAS QM systems, complaints can be processed and tracked together with suppliers according to the 8D method. All participants have the same view of the respective information, and communication proceeds in a structured and documented manner. Considerable process improvements are the main user benefits. Thanks to the more consistent processing of the 8D-Reports repeat errors can be virtually eliminated. The problem messages, the storing of the supplier replies and the respective documents, as well as the tracking of schedules and deadlines, are automated and accelerated. This ensures the efficient and reliable processing of complaints: Jürgen Oberle: "The Problem Solver offers a number of advantages: transparent communication, a uniform data base and thereby a decisive acceleration and enhancement of processes. This tool rounds off the SupplyOn QM solution portfolio in an ideal manner. Thanks to the SupplyOn solutions we are able to further optimize quality management together with our customer and thereby meet customer requirements to increasingly higher levels."

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