

Redwood Business Solutions

Making complex processes easy to manage.

At A Glance

Industry

- High Technology

Environment

- UNIX Servers (HP UX) • ServiceGuard
- HP OpenView systems management
- 1300 SAP® end-users
- Offices in 14 countries
- 4500 daily batch jobs

Key Challenges

- Basis team manually administering high volume of SAP batch jobs
- Unable to effectively manage dependencies between SAP jobs
- No facility to re-run failed processes from point of error
- The need to process over 5000 orders a day

The Solution

- Smooth migration of SAP jobs to SAP Central Process Scheduling in just one week
- Automated scheduling of all SAP batch workload
- Single point of control for SAP workload across all application servers

Key Benefits

- Improved efficiencies in order fulfilment
- More productive Basis administration team
- Better return on hardware investment



Faster order fulfilment now possible for Actebis with SAP Central Process Scheduling by Redwood

When Actebis, one of the leading European IT and telecommunications distributors wanted to get better control over its complex SAP processing in order to fulfill over 5000 daily Customer orders more efficiently, it turned to SAP Central Process Scheduling for an out of the box scheduling solution that integrated seamlessly with SAP and other applications.



With 2700 employees located across 13 European countries, Taiwan and Hong Kong, company revenues now exceed 4 billion annually. As part of the Otto Versand group, which features 90 companies across 23 countries including Eddie Bauer, Crate & Barrel, Spiegel, Otto and Grattans, Actebis has managed to leverage the experience of the world's largest mail order company in becoming a successful distributor of IT products.

Operational challenges discovered with SAP process automation During the production rollout of SAP to the 1300 end-users, the effective management of background batch processing became essential. On a typical day, there were 4500 jobs that needed to be run and many of these jobs were recurring. As a result, Basis staff found themselves spending a lot of time creating and submitting jobs.

Actebis started to implement SAP R/3® at the beginning of 2001 with a view to becoming more efficient in managing the manufacturing cycle and improving its stock control. As well as providing a solution that was truly international in supporting more than 30 languages, SAP has also enabled Actebis to benefit from a better flow of information across the organization, allowing each employee to provide customers with up-to-date product availability and order status details.

"Knowing what our expansion plans are, I feel safe in the knowledge that SAP Central Process Scheduling will be a part of our infrastructure and continue to help us be more effective in the management of our daily workload."

Jörg Heinemann
SAP Basis Administrator, Actebis



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Jörg Heinemann, SAP Basis Administrator at Actebis, takes up the story: "The scheduler that comes out of the box from SAP is easy to use when you want to create a single job that doesn't have any dependencies. It's fully supported by SAP and is well suited when all you are running are small, simple jobs."

"In our environment, the users need to run a lot of work on a periodic basis – in some instances every ten minutes throughout the day. With the SAP scheduler, there was no easy way to define a single job to run on a repeated basis, during business hours only. We found ourselves having to create separate jobs, each scheduled to run for one of the set intervals during this period."

This created a major problem at Actebis when users wanted to stop the recurrent jobs for a couple of hours. It meant that existing jobs for the period requested had to be deleted and new jobs created for the same period, the following day. Heinemann continues: "Not only was the administration task of dealing with these requests a fairly time consuming process for our Basis team; it wasn't long before we also found ourselves with a lot of jobs to manage. I don't think our users realized how much work we had to do in turning these repeating jobs off and back on again."

Another major requirement for Actebis was the need to manage batch workload where there were dependencies on other jobs. Heinemann explains: "It wasn't possible to create job nets with dependencies using the SAP scheduler. Some of the jobs we run have more than 20 steps and we also have quite a few jobs

that need to process batch input maps. Without knowing when one job finished, it was difficult to predict when the following job should run. We did try writing extra ABAPs to send email and SMS messages to alert staff that jobs had ended but this proved far from satisfactory."

Taking control of all SAP processing

Against this background of operational challenges, there was also the business requirement to process approximately 5000 orders a day. Actebis needed a solution that would address the current issues and offer a foundation for integration between SAP and other applications, including their warehouse management system, DLS.

Prior to implementation, there were more than 46,000 SAP job definitions. With SAP Central Process Scheduling in place, Actebis managed to rationalize its huge number of SAP jobs down to 570 Redwood scripts, including 140 job nets and 300 independent jobs. SAP Central Process Scheduling was installed and deployed within one week.

Heinemann comments: "In order to complete our conversion to the Euro, we needed to shut down all SAP systems for one weekend. This presented us with a timely opportunity for the production deployment of SAP Central Process Scheduling. It was a very smooth transition. At the end of the weekend, we had our new Euro compliant SAP systems up and running, with SAP Central Process Scheduling managing all batch workload."

"Instead of sometimes needing six Basis administrators to create and submit jobs, we now only have one administrator looking after things, enabling the rest of the Basis team to deal with other important SAP issues that arise during the day. Another benefit we enjoy with SAP Central Process Scheduling is a single point of control from which we can manage all batch workload across

multiple SAP application servers.

"With SAP Central Process Scheduling, we have dramatically simplified the way in which we manage our SAP background workload. The system runs more efficiently with dependent jobs starting as soon as preceding ones have completed. We also have much greater control over how the workload is distributed. We are using the rule-based calendaring feature in SAP Central Process Scheduling to deal with the recurring jobs. This feature has also been extremely helpful in enabling Actebis to schedule jobs that need to run across multiple time zones and in countries running on different business calendars."

The continuing rollout of SAP is set to result in Actebis having over 2500 SAP end-users by the end of 2004 and there will be days when the number of jobs will exceed 6000. Heinemann adds: "Knowing what our expansion plans are, I feel safe in the knowledge that SAP Central Process Scheduling will be a part of our infrastructure and continue to help us be more effective in the management of our daily workload."

Efficient order fulfilment

SAP Central Process Scheduling has played a major part in enabling Actebis to become more responsive in processing customer orders. Heinemann concludes: "Actebis operates in a highly competitive market with very demanding customers who expect prompt delivery on the orders they place. We like to try and achieve 100% order fulfilment for the following day and SAP Central Process Scheduling is certainly playing a large part in helping us to achieve this. Together with our warehouse application, SAP Central Process Scheduling is able to start processing orders as soon as they have been received and with around 5000 orders a day, this will have a significant positive impact on our business."



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