

in Focus:

BENNINGER

APPLICATION RETIREMENT WITH JIVS IMP

BENNINGER SAVES 80% ON OPERATIONAL COSTS WITH JIVS IMP

Reducing complexity is a critical business goal. Only in this way can companies achieve the agility they need to compete in a volatile global marketplace. Textile machinery specialist [Benninger](#) is no stranger to this approach. With a history spanning 160 years, the globally renowned Swiss company pursues a long-term strategy that is focused on its core competencies. Since 2013, the company's in-house IT department has been instrumental in reducing complexity by consolidating and harmonizing the system and application landscape. And since 2020, JIVS IMP has helped Benninger to extend this strategy to include system-independent management of its entire life cycle of legacy data and documents. The result? Three short months to decommission a legacy system, plus ongoing operational savings of around 80%. What's more, there is no longer a need for IT to maintain specialist knowledge on the legacy solution. Against a backdrop of skills shortages and demographic change, this represents another important contribution to reducing complexity and safeguarding the company's future.

„I've been bowled over by the speed and quality of the JVS IMP project. Feedback from the business side has also been positive. Employees report that working with JIVS IMP is more convenient than the legacy system.“

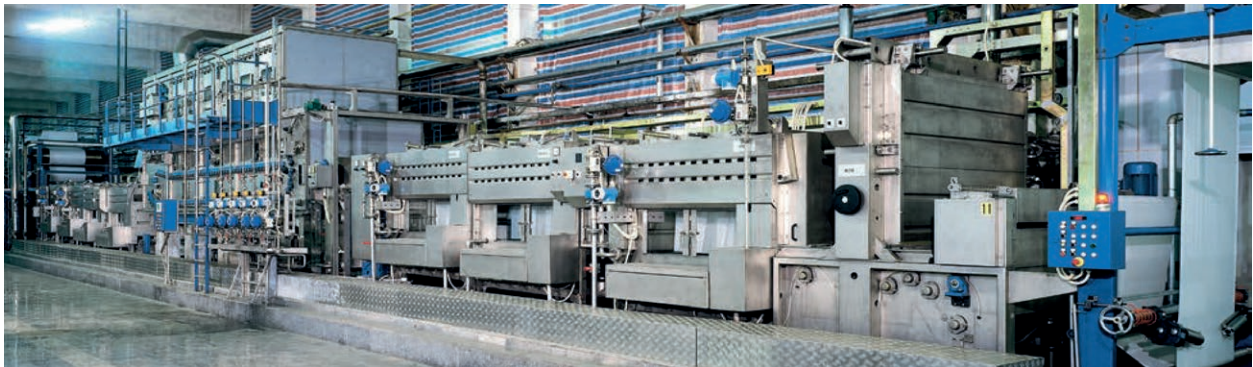
Alexander Rehbeck, Head of IT bei der Benninger AG

Challenge

Concentrating on core competencies in business means reducing complexity in IT - through centralization and harmonization. This also means that any specialist knowledge outside of these core areas can be disregarded - an important factor in times of chronic skills shortages. *„With our 160-year history, we are the Mercedes of textile machinery manu-*

facturing. Above all, our customers value our reliability and quality. This lies at the very core of our business and brand identity. To ensure it stays that way, our management took steps to future-proof the company by offshoring some of our production areas and selling our third-party automation division,” reports Alexander Rehbeck, Head of IT at Benninger AG in Uzwil, Switzerland.

This strategic focus on the company's core business has been central to the work of Benninger's IT division since 2013. The department has progressively consolidated and harmonized the company's application and system landscape into one central SAP system - with a single client and separate company codes for plants and locations worldwide. The final



subsidiary to move to the SAP system in early 2020 was Benninger Zell GmbH, based in Zell im Wiesental.

This left Benninger with legacy systems from a variety of providers, running on different platforms. Maintaining these systems is not only costly. At times it also demands a very particular level of expertise. And to satisfy legal and business requirements, the company has to guarantee audit-proof access to legacy data and documents for many years after consolidation. *"In the case of the previous ERP solution at Benninger Zell, we were looking at a timescale of as much as 50 years. This is because information on customer installations stays relevant for as long as those installations are still in use. Providing spare parts over such a long period of time is a typical scenario in mechanical and plant engineering,"* Alexander Rehbeck points out.

In addition to the expected cost of replacing the system, which came from software provider BRAIN and was running on an IBM AS/400 machine, there were two further complicating factors. In the first place, the hardware was near the end of its support period. Secondly, the only remaining AS/400 specialist at Benninger AG was due to retire in the fall of that year. *"We already had three good reasons to not only replace the legacy system, but to shut it down altogether. But to do so, we needed a different solution that could meet the challenge of legacy data head on,"* explains Alexander Rehbeck.

Solution

"From the start, we were looking for more than a one-off solution. We needed a universal platform that we could use in the future to decommission other legacy systems. This economy of scale was argument enough to justify our investment in the long term, in contrast to the custom programming we previously carried out when retiring systems," reports Alexander Rehbeck.

From April to June 2020, the company set about evaluating the different solutions in the market. JiVS IMP, the information management platform from Swiss provider [Data Migration International](#), emerged as the most suitable. Alexander Rehbeck elab-

orates, *"The installation and maintenance is very sleek. And the platform is so intuitive and easy to use, that employees can help each other regardless of location, without having to rely on IT. Equally impressive for us was the platform concept. This allows us to manage the entire life cycle of historical information independently of the original applications. And we can do so with efficiency and legal certainty – a prerequisite for system decommissioning and the resulting cost savings."* At the same time, Alexander Rehbeck worked with the company's different business units to define specific requirements and establish which data and views needed to remain accessible. A particular focus was to determine which tables would have to be linked. These linked views, termed "business views" by Benninger, needed to be available in full in JiVS IMP.

The project got the go-ahead in late June 2020 and things really took off from there. By July, the JiVS platform was being installed in the Benninger data center in Uzwil. This was followed in August by the creation of the so-called business views in the database of the BRAIN legacy solution. In total, 230GB of data and around 5,000 tables were transferred to the platform. Testing in mid-August resulted in minimal reworking, thanks primarily to the exemplary preparatory work of Benninger's business and IT departments. Alexander Rehbeck involved business colleagues in the project from the start and organized joint workshops to familiarize staff with JiVS IMP. The platform proved itself so intuitive and easy to use that no further training was required. After the final sign-off, JiVS IMP went live in late September and the BRAIN system was switched off for one final time.

The AS/400 hardware will be retired by 2021 at the latest, after the next audit. Currently it is still supporting a financial accounting system. Post audit, the system's data will no longer be needed and can be deleted.

Benefits

Only two months after implementation, [JiVS IMP](#) is already delivering on its business goals. Thanks to the platform, Benninger is making annual savings of around 80% on its ongoing operational costs. The



total cost of ownership over a five-year period is set to be 30% less than the cost of keeping the legacy system going. Removing AS/400 alone adds up to savings of 60,000 Swiss francs for the same period.

"These results are all the more striking when you consider that we've only decommissioned one system. And our AS/400 specialist was able to embark on his retirement without having to worry about how the system or his successor will cope," adds Alexander Rehbeck. "It's no feat of the imagination to envisage the potential savings that lie ahead. Even without fixed plans, there are currently two systems that could be decommissioned using JiVS IMP – a 2017 SAP legacy solution and a document management system."



And there's another thought occupying the IT leader. In 2024 or 2025, the company is set to make the move from its current SAP system to SAP S/4HANA. As a platform that boasts front-end and back-end integration with SAP's new software generation, JiVS IMP has the potential to significantly reduce conversion costs, not to mention lowering the total cost of ownership of Benninger's future ERP landscape. And who knows? By then, there's every chance that further spin-offs may be on the cards, or acquisitions of new business units. Either way, JiVS IMP is primed and ready to support Benninger with the separation or integration of legacy information.