



Case study

SIG Combibloc reduces planning time by half using Quintiq Macro Planner



SIG Combibloc is a division of SIG Holding AG, based in Neuhausen am Rheinfall, Switzerland, and is one of the world's leading providers of carton packaging and filling machines for beverages and food. The company supplies complete systems including both the packaging materials and the corresponding filling machines. With a diversified, worldwide customer base and plants spread throughout Europe and Asia, SIG has been growing rapidly throughout the past several years.

SIG's previous planning situation: struggling with spreadsheets

Before the Quintiq planning solution was implemented at SIG, all planning was conducted in Microsoft® Excel® spreadsheets, with local planners manually entering data. "Everyone was using the system differently and it was very time consuming to compare the numbers. You needed to be a professional to be able to read the plans," recalls Carmen Zech, Head of Global Resource Management at SIG. With Excel, gaining a company-wide overview was complicated, which hindered cooperation between the plants, especially with regards to capacity sharing.

The search for a better planning system

In 2002, SIG was looking for ways to increase its production capacity to answer the growing demand for its products. It realized that to keep up with this growth, it needed to better allocate production between their five manufacturing facilities. Being a SAP® software user, SIG first searched for the right SAP tools. However, it found SAP could not provide the insight needed to relieve bottlenecks or adequately support the complex decisions a growing company must make. At the time, SIG was redesigning its whole supply chain with the help of Capgemini. Capgemini recommended SIG look into Quintiq solutions to answer its planning needs. In October 2004, Quintiq and Capgemini performed a proof of concept to prove Quintiq could support SIG's strategic planning and their scheduling. They satisfactorily demonstrated the capabilities and the flexibility to meet SIG's complex scheduling needs at the time and in the future as the company grows. In addition, Quintiq's configurable interface, its ease of use and the fact that it could be seamlessly integrated with the SAP system already in place were strong arguments for SIG. The implementation was planned to be conducted in phases: Quintiq Macro Planner first, then Quintiq Scheduler second.



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– Carmen Zech,
Head of Global Resource
Management at SIG

The Quintiq solution: full transparency and a major timesaver

Centralization improves decision making

SIG had many goals for the Quintiq implementation, including maximizing capacity utilization, reducing bottlenecks, streamlining its supply chain and improving cooperation between SIG’s multiple manufacturing facilities. A centralized planning system, which provided company-wide transparency, was the key to reaching these goals.

With Macro Planner, all the data is entered into the system in a unified manner. The same data entry rules apply to all of SIG’s planners, whether in Germany, China or Thailand. SIG’s managers can now examine and analyze the data to support more precise, strategic decision making.

Additionally, having a unified, centralized system enables company-wide transparency and cooperation so that SIG can now better utilize its existing production capacities. “At SIG, Quintiq is used globally,” notes Zech. “Everybody can see exactly what is going on everywhere. So for example, if in Germany there is full utilization but the same product can be produced in China, we check to see if there is additional capacity in China and then shift the volume. This type of procedure is possible as a result of the transparency Quintiq provides us.”



Planning takes hours instead of days

The Macro Planner facilitates and speeds up the planning process. One of the complaints about planning with Excel was how much time the whole process took. “In the old system it was extremely time-consuming to put the data into the system,” recalls Zech. “Now, in combination with SAP, what used to take one complete day takes about an hour. We are really happy with how much time Quintiq is saving us.”

Bottlenecks: visible and solvable

Bottlenecks are a problem for every manufacturing company and SIG was no exception. Quintiq enables SIG to predict, locate and compare scenarios for relieving bottlenecks, which helps keep production running as smoothly as possible across all plants.

“Previously, plant managers couldn’t always see when a problem was developing. Now everyone sees a bottleneck coming and deals with it much better, for example by shifting the volume to another plant or notifying customers of a change in the delivery times. Quintiq supports us in making fast decisions to find a better solution,” explains Zech.

The SIG-Quintiq future: room to grow

With Quintiq, SIG has been able to reduce its planning time by more than half. At the same time, it has improved capacity utilization, enabling it to keep up with customer demand – which has increased dramatically due to SIG’s growth.

In light of this success, SIG is already in the process of implementing additional Quintiq tools, including Quintiq Scheduler, and has begun expanding the use of the Macro Planner into other departments. Quintiq is committed to supporting SIG as the company grows toward a bigger, more successful future.

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