



ATOS MEDICAL HELPS ENT PATIENTS

Medical technology supplier relies on SAP PLM integration for SolidWorks from CIDEON Software

Government regulations in the healthcare industry regarding management and storage of documentation for medical devices and implants are very strict. Atos Medical has mastered these tasks with CIDEON Software and SAP PLM.

More than 100,000 people each year fall ill with cancer of the larynx. In extreme cases, this illness requires removal of the larynx — a traumatic experience for the patient. Atos Medical helps these individuals with a prosthesis that restores their voices, simulates the filtering function of the nose, and protects against pneumonia. Atos Medical's products, which improve quality of life significantly for patients and enable them to return to active social lives, have earned them a leading position in the global market. The young company specializes in developing products for rehabilitating ear, nose & throat patients. It has seen high growth rates over the last 10 years and is now represented by its own branches or partners in 55 countries around the world.

Demanding requirements

Strict legal requirements such as those enforced by the USA's Food and Drug Administration apply to medical device manufacturers active in international markets. Product documentation for medical devices generally must be archived for at least 10 years, even after the product has

SAP PLM Integration for SolidWorks

avoids double data acquisition and ensures reliable approval processes. This CIDEON solution enables access to current CAD data for other departments and ensures convenient SAP functionality from within SolidWorks. It reproduces the SolidWorks data model in SAP PLM.

been pulled from the market. And for implants, the documents must be kept for 75 years. Signatures are required for every document that is approved. Consequently, a paper version is still considered the mandatory original and includes the corresponding approvals and signatures.

Thomas Selvä joined the company in 2003 as a development engineer. Product development was already being done with SolidWorks, the earlier 2D-system having been replaced in 1998. CAD data were managed with Windows Explorer — an unsatisfactory situation. "Even then, we had already started thinking about a PLM solution and were gathering information about the market," he recounted. Over time, the scope of the project expanded, additional departments became involved, and new requirements were continually added. Atos Medical finally realized, "We need a new ERP system," and decided to adopt SAP. The result of these deliberations was a project that required tight integration of ERP and PLM.

One supplier – one system

"We investigated various PDM solutions and saw several advantages in SAP PLM. SmartTeam was on our short list, but was seen as too expensive over the long term," said Selvä. In the end, the decisive factors were the integration and the idea of working with a single system and provider. The selection committee was considering licensing in addition to implementation and data flow. At the end of 2006, the decision to use SAP PLM and integrate SolidWorks was made.

For the ERP implementation, Atos Medical worked with Implema, a local SAP partner. The search for a solution to integrate SolidWorks ended with IT specialists gedas, the Volkswagen subsidiary, at the time still developers who offered SAP PLM integration for SolidWorks. Shortly there-

after, CIDEON software acquired this product line from gedas and as a result became the implementation partner. “CIDEON provided very competent support during the evaluation phase,” remarked Selvä. Later, in Hörby, a review workshop took place where the necessary modifications were defined and recorded within the product specifications.

“The implementation was certainly no trivial task. We had little relevant experience. There were a lot of decisions to make, functions to specify, adaptations to perform and to test. We had no examples to go by, and had to find our own way. The experience and competence of CIDEON was a great help during this phase,” recounted Selvä. The majority of the modifications were performed on the SAP side. CIDEON carried out the desired modifications for the interface between SolidWorks and the SAP PLM. And Atos Medical also changed some of its workflows to ensure better integration.

Efficient management of product data

The project lasted longer than planned. “The completion deadline however was only of secondary importance. The highest priority was to receive a reliable, high-quality solution. In the end, we received an implementation that fulfills all the strict requirements we have for our product devel-

opment. Both company management and the users are very satisfied. We were able to keep total project costs for the ERP solution and PLM integration essentially within the planned budgets. The solution has been stable and running for about a year now and has proved to be excellent,” Thomas Selvä concluded.

The key benefit for Atos Medical is efficient and reliable management of all product development documentation with regard to both approvals and electronic access for authorized users including the signed, approved documents. “We always know exactly which one is the most current document. Searching for documents is now simpler and quicker. Change management is implemented in a reliable and structured manner in our solution. Now we create a change history of our documents in the SAP system, enhancing the value of the system daily. Approval processes are replicated in the PLM module, ensuring that only reviewed and approved documents make it to production,” explained Selvä.

Digital signature functionality has not yet been implemented. Currently, documents are scanned after they have been signed and imported back into SAP. There, they can be accessed electronically by authorized users. A solution for digital signatures is slated for one of the next phases and will enable the elimination of paper archives.

Atos Medical AB

is an international provider of medical devices and implants for the ENT field. The company’s products for voice restoration after total laryngectomy lead the market.

Atos medical has over 220 employees worldwide and is headquartered in Hörby, Sweden with branch locations in the UK, the USA, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Belgium.

At a glance

Company: Atos Medical AB, Hörby, Sweden
Challenge: To create an integrated product data management system
Solution: SAP PLM integration for SolidWorks from CIDEON
Benefits: The strict requirements for traceability of all product development processes are fulfilled.
CIDEON Services: SAP PLM integration for SolidWorks, implementation, modifications

