



Avid Technology streamlines sales and marketing around mySAP CRM

Integration Is Key

To provide internal and external customers with the best possible service, Avid Technology, a U.S. media solutions provider, reworked its IT strategy and chose SAP to provide a single global application, centering on mySAP CRM and SAP R/3. This was all designed to maximize efficiency and accuracy through the entire sales and service cycle.

■ A “single global application”: That is the key to the IT strategy at Avid Technology, a media-solutions provider based in Tewksbury, Massachusetts, just north of Boston. Only 14 years old, the company has grown exponentially to service customers across the globe in industries and areas as diverse as filmmakers, broadcast studios, universities, sports teams, and rock musicians.

Avid previously supported several best-of-breed solutions which, when added to the legacy systems and the modules of SAP R/3 that the company was running, created much overhead. In 1999, the IT department – under the direction of Jan Pope, CIO and VP of Information Systems – was asked to restructure and consolidate the IT organization, including a significant reduction in headcount. Patricia Conley, director of Global Applications, was responsible for coordinating the applications consolidation and restructuring plans.

“What made the most sense was to have a consolidated and integrated ERP solution by moving everyone to SAP. Considering the limited number of people we had left to support the applications and our limited budget, this appeared to provide Avid with the most cost-effective solu-

tion,” Conley explains. This would enable them to maximize interoperability through a common interface. It would also mean that they could enhance the level of service they offered to customers through an integrated system.

Avid has been an SAP customer since 1996. The company wanted to replace its existing functionality so that processes would be preserved, while streamlining, automating, and improving the infrastructure behind it. Thus Avid would have more knowledge internally to better support the single solution. They also found this to be a cost-neutral solution that provided better integration across the organizations.

By avoiding costly upgrades and integration of their legacy applications, they were able to focus on, and improve the workings of their SAP solution.

All IT projects at Avid are prioritized using an Applications Roadmap, devised in 2000 with Avid’s purchase of mySAP.com licenses. Conley and her team also work with the business end to identify the most significant business needs that require IT support.

In May 2001, for example, Avid upgraded to SAP R/3 4.6C to add service management functionality that was lacking in their previous version. Then, in October 2001, they implemented SAP Business Information Warehouse 2.1C to provide analytics from SAP and non-SAP systems. mySAP Customer Relationship Management (mySAP CRM) was brought on board in 2002.

Avid later upgraded to SAP CRM 3.0 in August 2002, which was, as Conley recalls, “very painful,” compared to the previous SAP implementations. Conley emphasizes, though, that throughout the process they had excellent help from SAP consultant Dennis Visconti: “He was extremely supportive.” Avid was used to easy upgrade methods and tools, so they were expecting a similar upgrade path. Instead, Conley explains, they were initially advised that they would have to reimplement SAP CRM and that tools were not available. After discussion with SAP, however, they did receive an upgrade kit, “although we felt this was really alpha code and we were the first to use it,” Conley says. Initial test runs in the development system suggested that it would take two weeks to upgrade, because troubleshooting would often be required to move to the next step. Eventually they reduced the time needed to upgrade to one week and finally down to less than 48 hours. Go live for SAP CRM 3.0 was originally scheduled for August 2002, but actually went live in October.



■ AVID

Founded in 1989, Avid has grown to include more than 1,500 employees worldwide with U.S.\$419 million in revenue for 2002. Developers of nonlinear software solutions that make, move, and manage media, the company is listed on NASDAQ and has won an Academy Award and several Emmys for its work.

The next step was to implement sales, service, and marketing functionality, together with SAP and Rapidigm, a Pittsburgh, PA-based SAP partner. This part of the CRM project was led by Chad Wright, Applications Manager Information Systems. The goals of this project were to integrate sales, service, and marketing data and business processes; provide better visibility to the management of worldwide sales leads; track, manage, and distribute sales leads to the appropriate sales partners; and provide marketing analytics for improved segmentation of audiences and creation of target groups.

Throughout the project, Wright and his team used a combination of Avid project management methodology and ASAP. The project planning phase was completed in early June 2002 with an original launch date of late November. Delays were encountered due to poor system performance on data loads – in fact, they discovered a bug in the delta queues used to synchronize data between CRM and R/3. Avid worked closely, though, with Rapidigm and SAP to resolve the performance issue, and applied appropriate SAP Notes. Altogether, Avid migrated over 850,000 business partners from its legacy Onyx system to SAP CRM. The new functionality went live January 22, 2003.

To improve the visibility of sales leads, Avid users can now access SAP CRM in three ways to enter information: through Web sites (avid.com, digidesign.com, and softimage.com); by manually entering data in SAP CRM; and through Microsoft Excel spreadsheets. Marketing uses the spreadsheets to capture information from events, tradeshows, road shows, and then uploads this data to SAP CRM through batch processing. Each lead is checked for the geography of the business partner and the product(s) of interest. These two pieces of information are used to determine the appropriate sales team – reseller, field sales, and inside sales. “We call this partner determination,” explains Wright. Super users can then review the leads manually to ensure validity and send leads in batch to resellers and field sales as a Microsoft Excel e-mail attachment.

For marketing analytics, Segment Builder is used with SAP BW 2.1C. The SAP BW system contains over a half million sales leads, as well as sales data from existing customers. This information is used by the marketing teams to identify market trends and target audiences for specific mar-

keting promotions. Together with SAP CRM, BW is also used to analyze, create, and execute personalized e-mail promotions to thousands of prospective customers simultaneously, instead of having to export data to Microsoft Word for a mail merge.

Avid also uses SAP CRM Market Planner to organize over 7,500 marketing campaigns, which were migrated to SAP CRM. Wright and his team created a structured organizational hierarchy to classify and categorize the marketing campaigns that support the four different marketing organizations within Avid that use SAP CRM (Avid corporate, Digidesign, Softimage, and iNews).

So what have users been saying about the new CRM solution? Efficiency. Efficiency. Efficiency. Wright says the telemarketing group at Avid subsidiary, Digidesign, in California, is very pleased with SAP’s CRM marketing function-

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ality. The integrated solution enables them to process their outbound telephone campaigns more efficiently. Additionally, the ability to send out leads in batches, “has been a huge timesaver,” Wright says. They are also enthusiastic about the integration with SAP BW, which gives them an excellent overview of which people they have contacted and much greater analytical functionality.

Avid’s other main use for SAP CRM is for their customer interaction center, which was previously based on a solution by Clarify, with an Aspect phone system. This part of the project was led by Jonathan Thomas, SAP IS Manager. The goal was to move to a better-supported phone switch that they could understand, enhance, and modify themselves as their business model changed. The logic behind the routing of calls is to direct the customer to an agent skilled with that product knowledge. Avid implemented mySAP CRM Customer Interaction Center (CIC) and installed and configured telephony integration and routing software provided by AMC Technology. Only four months went by from delivery of the phone switch to go live, which was in May 2002.

The project went “surprisingly well,” as Thomas recalls. He had thought that recreating the call center functionality would be the most difficult part of their project, but it was not, despite some typical project issues along the way. Thomas credits excellent support from AMC, their SAP consultant, Mike Petrosch, and the internal Avid IT resources for much of the success. “This was really a three-way win,” Thomas says.

For Thomas, the key was that the new Service Management module gave SAP R/3 users a “tremendous amount of automation.” For the most part, SAP CRM and the integration with SAP R/3 were very well received. The only area where there were complaints was the screens in the SAP Service Management part of R/3. Customer service is looking for enhancements to the screens to improve their business process flow. But following the integration, installed base creation happens in real-time, once delivery goods are posted. Previously, it involved overnight batch runs. Plans are in place in 2003 to expand the telephony integration with CRM CIC, Avaya, and AMC Technology to other Avid call centers around the world.

All in all, the company has 600 users on SAP. CRM supports over 100 users in 12 countries in the Americas, Europe, and Asia, with support for several languages, including English, Spanish, German, and French. While the database and user interface are only available in English, prospective customers and Avid sales partners receive event confirmations and sales leads using e-mails in their own languages.

Avid is looking to begin phase two of their CRM project in 2004, following recommendations collected and discussed within the cross-IT and business teams. Later this year, they will implement SAP Quality Management. Conley and her team are also working on increasing their use of SAP BW to “provide sales with a customer dashboard, where they can get all the information relevant to that customer from BW.” Wright has already developed a prototype. They are now looking at adding information, such as contact points with the customer, service call information, revenue information, and responses to marketing programs. This will be another step toward maximum customer satisfaction.

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