

# Management of project documents taken to a new level

How the PIRS document management system helped CAC to achieve a significant increase in efficiency within a period of eighteen months.

## PIRS: a Collaboration Software for Projects



### Is this your experience?

Whenever the company secures a new project, the purchasing department has the job of procuring all the necessary equipment. Various departments are involved, technical specifications are drawn up and multiple suppliers are asked to provide a quote. For each process there are cover letters and filing routines. Eventually, the same data will have been entered into the system in different versions five, six or seven times over.

Sascha Mühlhausen, who leads the team at CAC that is taking document management to a new level, knows that this can also be done differently. For several years, he has been seeking out a document management and communication system (DMS) that is a perfect fit for the workflows at CAC. In PIRS, he has found a system that 80 percent meets his expectations – which is actually a very good match in DMS terms: “Sobis is a company that specialises in software solutions for large projects such as plant construction, so they understand our procedures and special requirements.” The Sobis system which has been in use at CAC for eighteen months has come to be regarded as indispensable in all engineering projects. Sascha Mühlhausen and his team are currently working with Sobis to optimally map CAC processes on the system.



Mühlhausen. “Every member of staff can see the planning status of a document, i.e. is it a draft, is it currently being reviewed by the customer, or has it already been approved? Everyone accesses the same database, because every document exists only once, securely stored in the system.” Using full-text searches, every authorised person can locate any item at any time, even if the actual contact person is not available at that moment.

The cover letters (referred to internally as ‘Transmittel’) which accompany each communication are stored together with the document. It is clear from this to whom and when documents were sent. In this respect, the system not only provides greater transparency, it also enables significant savings thanks to more efficient work processes. Sascha Mühlhausen: “Up to now, when preparing a cover letter listing all the enclosed documents, our staff had to go through umpteen tiny steps. That took a lot of time. With PIRS, all of this happens completely automatically. You click on the documents you want to send and select a recipient from the list. All additional elements are generated by the system – from the index number of the letter to the accompanying text. According to a Sobis survey, two-thirds of their customers estimate time savings of up to 30



The DMS is already showing tangible benefits, as the group leader explains: “Prior to PIRS, we only managed communication with our customers. In a typical project, we were handling around 2,500 e-mails. After six months of using PIRS, we are already incorporating a multiplicity of correspondence, because we now also include communication with our suppliers and with in-

minutes a day. Because thousands of such letters are generated by our company every year, this means a saving of tens of thousands of minutes, equivalent to several thousand euros a year.”

The system also offers numerous advantages for customers. Deadline monitoring, correspondence, approval processes, legal assurances and the involvement of third parties – PIRS allows all of this to be regulated in a verifiable and secure fashion. “We can set up a separate ‘room’ for everyone involved in a particular project, which we then fill with documents,” adds Sascha Mühlhausen. Partners, suppliers and customers are securely integrated into the system by means of a Cloud-based platform hosted by a certified data centre. The system has been designed to be intuitive, so that training can take place within manageable limits.

“For many of our customers, the use of a document management system is an impor-

tant prerequisite for the implementation of their project,” Sascha Mühlhausen stresses. PIRS is therefore a key factor in meeting the high quality standards for document management that CAC sets itself.

Are other members of staff as convinced of the merits of the system as Sascha Mühlhausen? He gives a wry smile: “Of course, any system is going to seem like an obstacle course when first introduced. But we have to think ever more digitally and above all learn to work with it. This calls for a lot of support within the company. We train our staff, exchange ideas, hold regular meetings and talk about ideas and the latest developments. In each engineering discipline, we designate key users to whom colleagues can address any questions.” His conclusion: “Even though introducing a system like this is not always easy, in the end it leads to a considerable increase in efficiency, which we can now clearly see after eighteen months of PIRS.”

The document management system supplied by Sobis has been specially conceived with plant construction in mind. PIRS, standing for Project Information Retrieval System, facilitates the efficient management and distribution of all information generated by a project on a uniform and secure Cloud-based platform.



### FACTS AND FIGURES

- 100 – 120**  
users per project
- 8**  
projects since the introduction of PIRS
- 25**  
customer and supplier portals (‘rooms’)
- Amount of correspondence recorded per project
- 2,500**  
e-mails before PIRS
- 10,000**  
items of correspondence After 1½ years of PIRS
- 100,000**  
items of correspondence Over a typical project duration of 3 years

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The system not only provides greater transparency but also enables significant savings through more efficient work processes. After eighteen months of PIRS, we are seeing a significant increase in efficiency.  
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Sascha Mühlhausen,  
Head of Document Management at CAC