Cooper Standard deploys SAP across its global business

Connecting 120 sites provides better data and business decisions

Cooper Standard is a leading global supplier of systems and components for the automotive industry. Headquartered in Novi, Michigan, it manufactures a range of products including rubber and plastic sealing, fuel and brake lines, fluid transfer hoses, and anti-vibration systems. With more than 32,000 employees globally, it operates plants in 21 countries around the world.

"The major difference between us and our competitors is our innovation," says Soma Venkat, Vice President of Information Technology, Cooper Standard. "We have developed innovative products like Fortrex, a superior kind of rubber – better heat transfer, better insulation, and it's lightweight. These kinds of innovations make us highly competitive."

Boasting more than 50 years of automotive excellent and innovation, Cooper Standard has grown via acquisitions around the globe. Many of the acquired companies came with existing technology systems that ran independently. The company could not easily gain a good global view into either its business processes or data.

Overview

Region: North America

Sector: Automotive

Client Challenges:

Cooper Standard needed to migrate its 120 facilities from nearly 50 existing disparate systems to a single instance of SAP.

Solution:

Working with Capgemini, Cooper Standard developed a single global process as well as common data elements to support easier reporting, facilitate business decisions, and improve data quality.

Benefits:

- Global view of almost all company data in one place
- Faster data reporting for better inventory control
- Talent can be allocated more effectively to ensure none of the facilities have a labor shortage
- Key decision-makers have easy access to important data through their smartphones.

Standardizing after acquisitions

Cooper Standard decided to move its 120 facilities from nearly 50 existing disparate systems to a single instance of SAP. This would mean developing a single global process as well as common data elements to support easier reporting, facilitate business decisions, and improve data quality. Creating this single process provides numerous advantages, such as making the company more agile and better able to make quick business decisions.

"Standardization and digitalization are two of the key strategic pillars for the Cooper Standard technology group," explains Venkat. "Connecting all of our global sites will give us better data faster, while we are taking out manual work, so it is basically touchless automation. It is an important part of a solid data strategy."

Connecting sites and data via SAP

The company initially started with a few plants in 2008 and one of the first challenges was to create the right global template. In 2016, Cooper Standard chose Capgemini as its implementation partner because of its global resources, automotive experience, and SAP knowledge.

Two sites were brought online per year. Changes were made to the global template based on experience gained from the early sites and, once the template was standardized, the process accelerated over the last three years. Cooper Standard and Capgemini have now brought 76 sites online.

"Now I have a global view of almost all of my data in one place," says Venkat. "The speed with which I can get my inventory control is much better and my talent is more mobile. It gives me the ability to move people from one plant to another seamlessly when there is a labor shortage. It is a huge win for the company and it also keeps our talent happy."

Delivering real-time information to the shop floor

Cooper Standard also consolidates data and its transactional systems into an analytics process, so it can access real-time or near real-time analytics at the plant level.

"So now my chief manufacturing officer, plant manager, or materials manager can look at their mobile phone and see the top-performing plants, safety numbers, and Operational Equipment Effectiveness (OEE), so they can see where the efficiencies or inefficiencies are happening," says Venkat.

"It is critical that you get a good partner, since your own talent is not going to be well-versed in the new technology. Capgemini is a high-level partner of SAP and had the ability to work in all of the different countries we needed support. Capgemini also had the automotive experience and they provided flexible solutions that were specific requirements for Cooper Standard."

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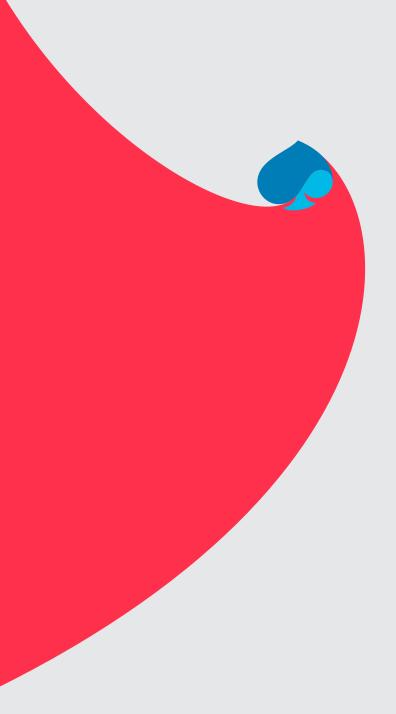
Soma Venkat
Vice President of Information Technology,
Cooper Standard.

For example, Cooper Standard had approximately 24 sites in China, so it was critical to have people experienced in the multiple languages, well-versed in that country's business processes, and with expertise working with other companies in China.

Cooper Standard plans to investigate the benefits of SAP S/4HANA and a move to the cloud. The company expects to move to S/4HANA within a year and will work with Capgemini on the rollout.

"One of the key elements for S/4HANA is the speed it offers and its ability to give us increased business intelligence," explains Venkat. "This will be the next step in our plans."

About Capgemini

A global leader in consulting, technology services and digital transformation, Capgemini is at the forefront of innovation to address the entire breadth of clients' opportunities in the evolving world of cloud, digital and platforms. Building on its strong 50-year heritage and deep industry-specific expertise, Capgemini enables organizations to realize their business ambitions through an array of services from strategy to operations. Capgemini is driven by the conviction that the business value of technology comes from and through people. It is a multicultural company of over 200,000 team members in more than 40 countries. The Group reported 2018 global revenues of EUR 13.2 billion.

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