



Customer Success Story

Ludwig Goertz

<http://www.goertz.de/>

1000-4999 Employees/Students

Retail Industry

For Ludwig Goertz, IBM Lotus Domino is the right step forward

“With Domino, several hundred software applications can be delivered in a personalized and secure way on a unified platform, and they can all be administered by a single person. Plus, the return on investment should rise for each new application. This is the kind of infrastructure we can use to deliver applications and to improve productivity and efficiency indefinitely.”

— Norbert Goedicke, Ludwig Goertz GmbH

Challenge

Provide some 3000 employees — scattered over more than 240 locations — with secure, role-appropriate access to up-to-date documents and information, just-in-time training and procedural approvals.

Solution

A portal solution based on IBM® Lotus® Notes® and Domino™ R5 that enables delivery of Goertz’s self-developed personalized messaging, document management, e-learning and workflow applications

Why IBM Lotus

Only the IBM Lotus Domino platform includes a full suite of messaging and collaboration applications, plus development and security tools that make it easy to customize access and content for each individual user.

Business Value

Improved paper-processing times by 25%; avoided need to hire additional staff for processing employment applications; saved between €200,000 and €300,000 by streamlining business processes; delivered over 300 new applications without adding administrators.

Key Components

IBM Lotus Notes and Domino R5/R6

IBM Lotus Domino Designer®

IBM Lotus Domino Document Manager (Domino.Doc®) 3.1/3.5

IBM Content Manager CommonStore 8.0 for Lotus Domino

IBM Lotus LearningSpace® 3.6

IBM Lotus Workflow™ 3.0a

IBM Lotus Instant Messaging (Sametime®)

Customer Profile

Not long ago Ludwig Goertz GmbH, a 128-year-old, family-owned shoe retailer based in Hamburg, Germany, started a process to develop an enterprise-wide infrastructure for distributing and managing messaging, documents, and other semi-structured and unstructured information.

“Digital and paper documents were spread around the company, and no one knew where to find the right version of any document,” says Jan Goldenbaum, a Goertz system analyst. “Most of the time people were working with information that was old and incorrect.”

Particularly problematic was the way Goertz communicated new or updated policies and operating instructions to its 3000 employees, many of whom are scattered among the company's 240 retail stores. The company had tried several Microsoft Access database applications to store and print information. "These applications distributed documents via e-mail, generated tons of paper and printing expense, and rarely got employees the information they needed when they needed it," says Goldenbaum. "Plus Access didn't give us the security we wanted; it didn't give us the ability to control which people saw what information."

Searching for more than messaging

In 2000 the company turned to its staff and its business partners and asked them what documents and information they needed to provide and share, and what technology would be best for the job. "The consensus was that we needed not only e-mail, but a platform over which we could deliver messaging, collaboration, document management and other applications," says Norbert Goedicke, deputy head of Goertz's IT department.

Goertz was already using IBM Lotus Notes and Domino 4.6 for e-mail and calendaring. So they weighed this release against Lotus Notes and Domino Release 5, and against classic HTML/SQL/script programming solutions. Ultimately the company chose Lotus Notes and Domino R5, Goedicke says, "because it enabled us to deliver the messaging, document management, e-learning and other applications our users and partners need, in a portal that we could automatically customize for each user."

Eliminating paper, confusion with IBM Lotus Domino Document Manager

Once Goertz settled on Lotus Notes and Domino, it began to use IBM Lotus Domino Document Manager (Domino.Doc) to simplify document and storage for its users — by integrating document management functionality into the Notes clients Goertz employees use every day.

For example, using the Lotus Domino Document Manager API Goertz devised a system that lets users archive any memo, fax, or other document by clicking a button. "The user clicks the button and chooses from a list of document libraries, then cabinets, then folders and binders to archive the document," says Goldenbaum. "Information for indexing the document is taken automatically from the sender, recipient, date and subject fields, and the user can specify additional keywords, including words from the body of the document."

Lotus Domino Document Manager has also helped Goertz streamline document-centric processes, such as processing the thousands of apprentice applications it receives each year. "We have a human resources development department that handles these applications, most of which are paper-based" says Goldenbaum. "But we needed a way to reduce the time it takes them to respond, without hiring extra staff."

So Goldenbaum and his team set up a personnel administration application, incorporating Lotus Domino Document Manager functionality, that lets human resource employees scan letters into a database using a network scanner. "From there our colleagues can index the documents, automatically create a folder for each applicant, and use a built-in text module to write or e-mail the applicants," says Goldenbaum. "All this allows us and our colleagues to find information instantly about any applicant."

Just-in-time training; time-saving workflows

Goertz also began using IBM Lotus LearningSpace to replace classroom training with e-learning courses that employees can take whenever they wish. Goldenbaum and Goedicke say that online training has dramatically reduced the amount Goertz spends on transporting employees or trainers around Germany and Austria. But more important than the savings is the speed with which employees can ramp up on new applications.

"When we roll out a document management solution," says Goldenbaum, "we can roll out training

at the same time using LearningSpace.” Goertz plans to use LearningSpace to deliver courses to training centers in larger German cities, which will enable employees to drop in and help themselves to training as needed.”

Goldenbaum adds that Domino workflows have enabled Goertz to “streamline business processes without reinventing them.” Some of the processes made more efficient by workflows range from filing an application for leave, to hiring a new employee, to handling the myriad procedures involved in establishing a new retail store.

“Just by increasing the front-to-back efficiency of processes and reducing printing and paper storage costs, these applications will probably save us between €200,000 and €300,000 this year,” says Goedicke, “and next year we expect to save even more.”

Personalizing everything in a portal

At this writing Goertz has deployed some 300 Lotus Domino databases and applications. To protect users from the confusion of navigating all these applications, Goertz has hidden the Notes “tile” interface behind a Web-like portal based on the Notes R5 client (see Figure 1). “The portal looks like an Intranet site,” says Goedicke, “but it’s only the Notes client, enhanced with Domino Designer elements like framesets and links.”

Each user’s portal displays links to exactly the applications he or she needs. “We’ve developed a navigation database that populates each person’s Notes client with the appropriate application links, based on the information in that person’s Notes ID,” says Goldenbaum. “It’s single sign-on, so the user signs on once to get access to all the applications in his or her portal. Plus we can control any user’s access at the database, row, table, section or field level.”

The portal also contains links to company-wide applications. Goedicke says Notes’ granular, field-level access control lets Goertz control which users see which parts of these applications.

“For example, we have an address database that includes work numbers, home numbers, some public information and some sensitive private information for each employee,” says Goedicke. “With Domino we can set up this database so that everyone can see the public information, and only a few people can see the private information (as, for example, contact information for next-of-kin in case of an emergency).”

Because many Goertz employees use dial-up connections, they really appreciate Notes replication. According to Goldenbaum, users in retail stores work offline with applications and rich content; replication occurs automatically, within specific time intervals, and provides changes from both sides quickly even over a 56Kbps phone or 64Kbps ISDN connection.

Benefits beyond savings

In addition to the savings mentioned above, Goedicke and his team estimate that the company has won back about one percent of total revenue by eliminating physical mailings and training-related travel. They also estimate they’ve reduced paper-processing times by 25% and will eliminate paper for long-term archiving within ten years. But Goedicke doesn’t like to restrict the discussion to numbers when adding up the benefits of Lotus Domino — because numbers don’t tell the whole story.

“It’s what the Lotus infrastructure allows us to do that’s most important in the long run,” he says. “With Lotus Domino several hundred software applications can be delivered in a personalized and secure way over a unified platform, and they can all be administered by a single person. It lets us integrate other applications and tools, such as IBM products for archiving and content management. And with the infrastructure in place, all future projects and software can make use of it. The return on investment should rise for each new application. This is the kind of infrastructure we can use to deliver applications, and to improve productivity and efficiency

indefinitely.”

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