



## We make Ford's business flow

The European lead-buyer team located in Cologne plans, purchases and installs everything from a 1000-ton compactor down to the smallest tool for every single European plant. To accelerate and optimize these processes, especially in the area of stamping, the Ford plant in Cologne uses the COSA BPM solution. This solution steers processes between the global player's departments all over Europe. After introducing COSA BPM, only half of the previous processing time is needed to transfer data safely to their destination.

Ford has an 80-years tradition in Europe. Nowadays, Ford acts in more than 130 markets worldwide. In the year 2000 alone, Ford sold about 5.9 million cars. A quarter of these sales was realized in Europe. In 1925, Ford established the first German plant in Berlin and started its German success story. In 1931, the first Model A came off the assembly line in the Cologne plant.

### **Optimizing and accelerating processes**

The group's Manufacturing Engineering team is responsible for the procurement and management of every single installation and tool that is needed during the production of a

car body. This includes everything, from shop floor planning over procurement of control software for manufacturing robots down to the provision of a simple screwdriver. Since September 2002, Ford has been using SECC (Stamping Engineering Change Costing), a solution based on the Workflow software COSA, to improve and accelerate the administration of frequent change requests. The webbased solution currently supports Ford's C 307 program on a European basis.

### **Coordinating between different plants**

If, for example, a work piece must be changed, a stamping expert in the British plant at Dunton first checks this request regarding technical feasibility. For this purpose, so-called cost sheets are created, in which the costs of the change request are described in detail. Then, the stamping expert adds various sketches depicting the necessary tool and installation changes to these cost sheets. As a next step, the process is transferred from Dunton to Cologne. There, further and detailed calculations, including scheduling plans are prepared. The Cologne department then coordinates the processes with the various

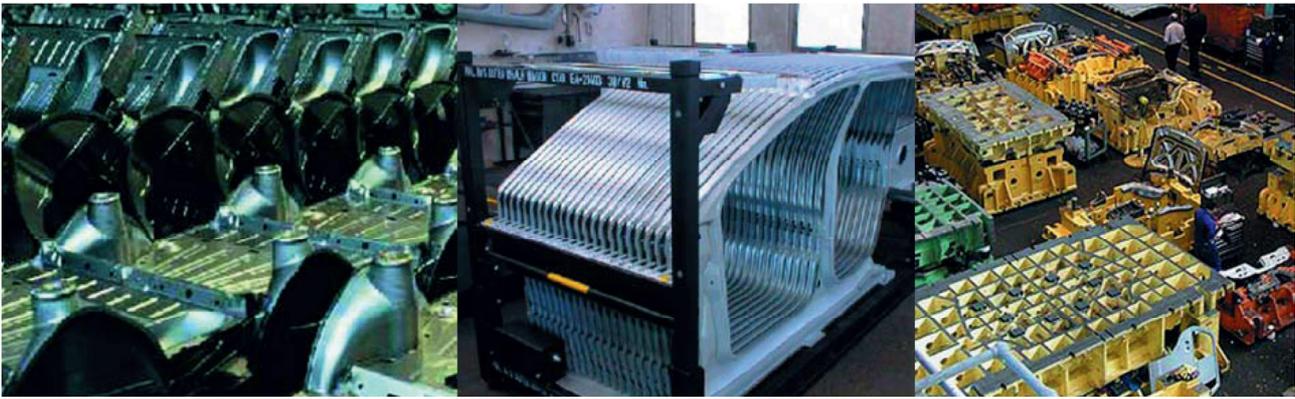
stamping and assembly plants throughout Europe. These must either confirm the costs or document any variances in cost sheets and sketches. Only after this coordination process has been completed the change request is actually commissioned.

Before the COSA BPM solution had been implemented, the Ford employees had to enter data manually into Excel forms. These often rather extensive documents as well as the sketches were then faxed back and forth several times between the involved parties. Errors in manual data entries and lost fax copies were inevitable. On average, it took three days before such a change request was coordinated.

### **Flexibility, transparency and time saving**

With the SECC solution, only half the processing time is needed. The solution is connected to Ford's intranet and employees can access it from any PC within the Ford premises. This process acceleration is mainly due to workflow coordination and management. A COSA Outlook Plug-in is used to assign all tasks required within the coordination process to the respective employ-

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ees' MS Outlook accounts. Then, these tasks can be processed directly in MS Outlook. There are no additional applications required. The involved sketches are scanned and linked to the process to make them directly accessible as attachments. For a more detailed view, they may be enlarged within a separate browser window. This eliminates errors that previously occurred due to poor legibility of fax copies. Furthermore, the user is always informed about the current project status. The system generates Outlook mails with real-time information on the current state of the decision process. Ralf Thomas, Head of the Systems, Stamping, Shell and Tool Manufacturing department, says: 'We particularly appreciate the flexibility and transparency of the COSA BPM solution. Processes are traceable and visible to all involved persons at any time and completed processes are immediately available on demand.'

Every process is easily identifiable by various search criteria such as model or confirmation number and may be passed on within minutes. Reducing the amount of paperwork is one more of the solution's many advantages. The changes in the

Stamping department usually resulted in up to 100 separate paper files per vehicle. Today, all data is archived electronically on one single file server.

### High user acceptance

Approximately 40 employees are currently using the system throughout Europe. As the COSA Workflow-based solution requires no new interface, the users simply have to be trained on Outlook's extended functionalities. Training, which in other cases may cause extensive additional costs, is limited to one or two hours. As the system relies on this well-known and user-friendly interface, it was immediately accepted by users. Ford considers using similar applications based on COSA BPM also in other departments.

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