NotesToPaper®

SUCCESS STORY

PUMA

One of the most desirable sportslifestyle brands in the world, on its way to be the first truly virtual sports company

PUMA optimizes Lotus Notes using NotesToPaper

Herzogenaurach, July 2002 PUMA endeavors not only to be the most desirable sportslifestyle brand in the world, but also to be the first truly virtual sports company. The innovative organization structure consists of a virtual head office and decentralized competence centers. At the end of the nineties, the infrastructure for a new generation of company communication was established based on Lotus Notes. After laying the groundwork for Notes as the worldwide operations platform, the first applications were integrated. In doing so, the internal cooperation was structured, made apparent to the employees and became much more efficient.

The Set-Up of Lotus Notes

The first applications developed by PUMA that were based on Lotus Notes, were designed to support the virtual product development process. All parties involved in this process were granted permanent access and the direct input of data was made possible at any development stage. A sports shoe for example was then designed in the USA, the design made available to the development centers in Germany and Hong Kong, a continuous exchange between these production sites was now possible up to the point in time where the product was finished and ready for production.

The information about an individual product was contained in different Notes documents.

The main challenge for the Notes developers at Puma was to ensure that e.g. the manufacturer of the product obtained meaningful printouts. As these documents were also a matter of a binding contractual basis, the handouts had and have to be available in writing.

The team around the two Notes developers Uli Schwarm and Georg Schiller immediately got down to work and focused on the job: At first, the information had to be retrieved from the database using Notes options only. Forms were designed to create print output, that initially met the relatively simple requirements. In order to print, the data was selected via Lotus Script, exported to Microsoft Excel and formatted for printing. It did not take long before the team came across a number of unsolvable problems: the creation of tables, dynamic page breaks and the insertion of pictures. Furthermore, a subsequent alteration of the printable data outside of the application had to be prevented. The more detailed the requests for the product became, the more obvious the problems to create precisely formatted print output grew. At that stage in the project, it became clear that requested reports could not be generated as the result would have been inefficient print times and the programming costs for the creation of the print output alone were incalculable.

Specification for a Print Tool

At first, the team in Herzogenaurach specified a catalogue of requirements:

· Development costs: reduce the cost for the setup and creation of printouts

· Flexibility: the very different print output requirements of the designers, product developers, and product managers had to be combined in the respective database

· Layout quality: a consistent data administration and design was a must

· Global availability: every employee should be able to use the extended printing functionality, at any time, in any place, completely location independent

Depending on the requirements, the measurement-tables for elements of a product can either be created as printouts or as PDF. Dynamic tables allow for customized layouts.
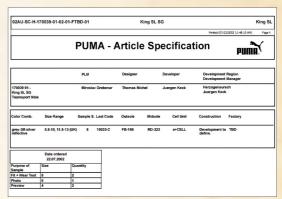
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NotesToPaper in Use

After the exact specifications had been defined, the PUMA team first evaluated the options of a possible integration of Microsoft-Office to their Notes applications. However, after a thorough analysis of all options, the decision was made to use NotesToPaper from SoftVision Development instead. According to Georg Schiller, SoftVision and their products could best support PUMA on its way into being the "paperless company".

NotesToPaper meets all criteria required by PUMA: The development costs are straightforward, flexibility in the layout design is granted, Notes compatibility given, central data administration of print templates possible and the worldwide availability is also ensured due to the seamless integration into the respective databases.

With the installation of NotesToPaper all reports necessary including the respective (and important) graphics can now effortlessly be created as PDF documents.

Costly fax or postal mailing distribution of information to be shared is no longer necessary. The product developers now have a tool at hand that best meets all their demands.

Within the scope of its internal communication, PUMA has developed an additional, very important module on its way to becoming the first truly virtual sports company with the help of NotesToPaper.

"Article Specification" of a PUMA shoe. Such specifications are used in the individual production sites in the manufacturing process.

Consolidation of a technical audit report of a PUMA subsidiary.

Dynamic layout design for various test results.

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