

# Success Story: SAP Automotive at Vibracoustic



Vibracoustic is the leader for automotive vibration technology, a successful joint venture formed at the beginning of 2001 when the vibration control divisions of the Phoenix and Freudenberg companies merged. The company enjoys a good reputation as an original equipment developer of vibration control modules and components for the international automotive industry due to a dedicated focus on customer requirements, a global structure and proven system capability. With 21 locations, Vibracoustic has a global presence. Products are supplied to all leading automotive manufacturers.

## One system landscape for all of Europe

„In the automotive industry, there’s no room for weakness,” says Volker M. Fluhr, controlling manager, automotive supplier Vibracoustic. The company, founded in 2001, concentrated from the start on one software for its IT infrastructure: SAP. As an experienced IT provider with more than 30 years of SAP experience, Freudenberg IT is a trump card up Vibracoustic’s sleeve.

From an IT perspective, the merger was a big challenge and also a big opportunity. Vibracoustic was no longer willing or able to continue using its parent companies’ legacy systems. Vibracoustic needed to create its own IT system and tailor it to the company’s needs. The company also had to implement the system during live operations without interrupting the customer’s day-to-day business.

One thing was clear right from the beginning: important factors for success in the production process had to be applied to business processes and IT as well. These standardized processes needed to be implemented across a uniform, Europe-wide system landscape. Externally, the company appeared as a uniform whole to customers.

Internally, however, company policy and legal reasons dictated that the three German companies (that is, the three company

codes) had to be run side by side in one system. This soon proved to be an advantage.

The experience of implementing three companies in one centralized system using a fully consistent model made it easier to integrate Vibracoustic’s global locations according to the same model later. This is confirmed by Georg Dietl, business manager at Vibracoustic in the Czech Republic, following implementation in 2003: “I’m very pleased with how the implementation went in the Czech Republic. It went very smoothly and we started production without a single hitch.” The requests and requirements of both parent companies had to be implemented in the system while having to create different balance statements, for example. Again, this was best achieved using a homogenous system landscape.

The advantages of this type of IT standardization are obvious. With a standardized system, upkeep is more economical and implementation costs at other locations are reduced since the company model can be transferred 1:1 to another subsidiary. Training materials only have to be created once and can be reused at all other locations.

"It takes relatively little effort to make structural changes to the company," stresses Reinhard Falke, head of IT at Vibracoustic. "In a homogenous system, even new releases can be implemented smoothly and economically," he adds. Employees require much less specialized knowledge than they do when working with multiple systems. Many functions can be controlled centrally, and some do not have to be provided at every location. In addition, experience gained at one location can immediately benefit other locations. In other words, synergies are fully leveraged and knowledge management is improved. At the same time, reporting becomes transparent because everyone can view figures in the same way.

Above all, standardization makes the IT provider's job easier. "After collaborating with Vibracoustic, we know the company's processes inside out and can easily implement them in SAP R/3," says Klaus Antczak from Freudenberg IT's automotive team.

Vibracoustic also profits from the experience Freudenberg IT has gained with other automotive customers over the years, including Freudenberg Dichtungs- und Schwingungstechnik (seals and vibration technology), Sachsenring Zwickau, Profil, and Corteco.

"Any development implemented for one customer is available to other customers as well. We see ourselves as a service and know-how provider in the automotive industry, using our knowledge to improve our customers' performance. Our customers benefit from the fact that we are organized into teams of experts with field offices at home and abroad. They also benefit from an efficient back office structure set up for solving special problems," Antczak explains.

The customer values this. "We're very happy with Freudenberg IT as our provider. We can really depend on Freudenberg IT and we value our collaboration as partners. They've maintained a strong relationship with SAP AG for years, and that's a plus for every customer," acknowledges Fluhr.

Christof Wörner, manager of controlling methods and systems at Vibracoustic, cites a positive side effect of the SAP implementation project on Vibracoustic's corporate culture: "The successful SAP project had a real integrating effect on the whole joint venture. Taking on a shared task with tight deadlines creates a strong bond and helps form a unique company identity!"

Freudenberg IT's data center in Weinheim, Germany is linking up the Vibracoustic world across Europe. System, consulting, and data center services are all combined under one roof. This means that official channels can often be bypassed, resulting in further simplification. It also prevents frictional losses and increases data security and availability. "Freudenberg IT's data center also has to stand up to competition," Fluhr says. Vibracoustic recently announced it was accepting bids for its data center operation. The result? Five companies competed for the job, and Freudenberg IT won.

We will gladly visit your location to discuss your specific needs and ideas. Please contact us to arrange an appointment.

**Freudenberg IT-Consulting KG**

Hoehnerweg 2-4  
69469 Weinheim • Germany  
Fon: +49 (0)62 01 80 80 00  
Fax: +49 (0)62 01 88 80 00

info@fit.com  
<http://www.fit.com>



DIN EN ISO 9001:2000  
Certificate No. 01 100 67104