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How Companies Can Benefit from Global Process Harmonization

AL-KO is a leading global manufacturer of axles, brakes, hubs, and drums to the light trailer industry. Headquartered in Germany, AL-KO maintains 40 companies throughout Europe, the United States, Australia, and Asia, with 4,000 employees worldwide. The company's US operations include manufacturing facilities in Oklahoma, Indiana, Georgia, and Oregon.



As with many companies that maintain multiple locations around the world, AL-KO experienced a disconnect between its processes in Germany and those in the US, specifically in the areas of inventory management and control. Determined to establish secure and robust procedures across the board, the company called on Ingenics to help fix the problem.

Ingenics brings a unique perspective to the task of harmonizing and standardizing processes worldwide. Leveraging in depth industry insights and a thorough understanding of international markets and cultural nuances, Ingenics effectively integrates local needs to enable consistency and eliminate discrepancies worldwide.

Starting the project with a systematic variance analysis, Ingenics worked directly with the AL-KO team to first assess existing business processes in every category (beyond just inventory) across all four US locations and then define target processes that would better support the company's business requirements.



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“When working with AL-KO to define target business processes, it was important to help them find the right balance between the needs of the US locations, and the processes and directives already in place at the company’s German-based headquarters,” explains

Ingenics’ Managing Partner Jörg Herkommer “Our ultimate goal was to help them accommodate both, while keeping in mind common universal support for the company’s overall best interests.”

As a next step, Ingenics led a series of workshops with AL-KO’s US staff to ensure the changes met their needs, and encourage user acceptance once the implementation was rolled out, eliminating potential conflicts and speeding the transition. With a roadmap in place and the team on board, Ingenics and AL-KO managed the implementation across all four US facilities.

As part of its approach to ongoing improvement, Ingenics then advised AL-KO to use the initial rollout as a test phase, gathering early feedback and applying it to further refine and streamline the new processes. Continuous staff engagement throughout helped to not only coach the team but to enable leaders within the organization to train and support their colleagues as well.

“Involving the members of the company in every location and at every level from start to finish is perhaps the most essential part of this type of project,” says Mr. Herkommer. “This is the only way to create lasting change that effectively takes into account both global and local needs.”



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Newsletter 10/2010

Raymond Kober, Member of the Executive Board at AL-KO, could not agree more. "Together we are strong, each one of us contributing to the common goal," he says citing one of the core principles of his company. "With everyone doing his or her job well and working together as a team, we are able to consistently exceed expectations," Mr. Kober continues.

Today, AL-KO enjoys secure, streamlined inventory processes, along with maximum transparency and efficiency across all of its business operations, in Germany and in the US, as well as worldwide.

The AL-KO project is a great example of the dilemma many companies are facing as they manage an increasingly global workforce. Ingenics continues to work with businesses to harmonize processes, implement technologies, and streamline efficiencies across borders. A case in point: the project Ingenics recently conducted for an international automotive supplier corporation with several plants across various continents. Some of the plants were doing much better than others, and the company needed to better understand why. A thorough analysis revealed that some locations had implemented highly streamlined processes, while others were still using much less efficient ones and there was no communication between them to help any one location learn from another's successes. Ingenics helped to establish global process standardization across the company's operations, and implemented a common ERP system worldwide.



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In the end, companies need to look at each location within the context of the entire organization, while leaving room to accommodate individual needs. Keeping local staff members engaged and involved at every step of the way is the key to achieve rapid and lasting success.

For more information on how Ingenics can help with global process harmonization, please contact us. **contactICA@ingenics.com**

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