Engineering Change Management in SAP

xft's engineering change management solution combines comprehensive document management with an active, transparent, and efficient process control. It is fully based on SAP and can be seamlessly integrated into a company's existing SAP system landscape – allowing to genuinely dovetail all sub-processes, whether they are related to products or to business aspects.

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Integrating your business processes

Highlights

SAP Integration

All xft solutions are seamlessly integrated into the existing SAP infrastructure. This means that all information and documents are available centrally and from any location – and there's no need to synchronize. Existing SAP data, objects, functions, and authorizations can be used immediately. At the same time, tools are available for easily integrating external data sources, such as CAD, e-mail, or documents from Windows file system, so that users don't have to leave the comfort of their familiar working environment.

Process Security

Thanks to the dynamic file, whose structure and context menus expand as the process continues, users can always see the current stage of the process at a glance. Deadline and status monitoring ensures that all tasks are completed reliably and on time. And as all process steps and all changes to the file and its content are documented, not only the transparency of the running process is enhanced, but it can also be traced completely in retrospect.

Continuity

Because the leading ERP system – SAP – is used as the platform, engineering change management can be established across the company with no integration gaps. In particular, by closely dovetailing engineering change processes with other processes in production (for example, production part approval processes or SOP management) as well as in sales and purchasing (such as orders), the transparency and efficiency not only of engineering change management, but also of the related processes are significantly increased.

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Engineering Change Management Without Integration Gaps

Engineering change management is a complex and highly collaborative process. Due to the many subprocesses and participants, working with distributed documents and task lists – as is practiced in many organizations – is soon stretched to its limits.

xft's engineering change management solution combines comprehensive document management with an active, transparent, and efficient process control. It is fully based on SAP and seamlessly integrated into a company's existing SAP system landscape – allowing to genuinely dovetail all sub-processes, whether they are related to products or to business aspects. Furthermore, because several SAP systems can be connected to an xft installation, xft's change management solution is a starting point for a company-wide, end-to-end engineering change management, across departments and locations.

The Engineering Change Process: Transparent, Controlled, Secure

The engineering change management process is modeled with the help of the basic components from the xft add-on suite, building on the processes already established in the company. It is possible to shape different processes, according to different types of change requests. The agent for each task is determined by using both the characteristics and relationships of the affected SAP objects and the organizational structure mapped in SAP.

The standard engineering change process is defined by a process schema, with the system ensuring that the standard is always met. At the same time, there is sufficient flexibility to meet the requirements of individual cases: If additional people need to become involved into a running process, tasks and circulation paths can be added to the process schema on an ad hoc basis.

Tasks are sent to the agents by SAP workflow or in an e-mail with a link giving direct access to the task. In the background, the system monitors the status of all tasks and sends out reminders if previously defined processing deadlines are not met. All process steps are logged by the system, as well as the changes made by the agents, so that the engineering change process is fully documented and can be traced in every detail at any time, even in retrospect.

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The Change File: A Process and Information Hub

In the change file, all engineering change processes and the documents involved are displayed in a structured way. As the process continues, the file structure expands dynamically and optimally guides the users through the change process.

Thanks to the status display, you can see at a single at a glance where process currently stands and which tasks still need to be completed. The most important functions for process control are directly accessible from the menu bar and the context menus, as well as are the key SAP transactions and objects, from material masters and BOMs through document info records for technical drawings to business partners and sales orders. As a result, the file significantly enhances the transparency of the process, while also increasing its efficiency.

Engineering Change Order: Process Overview with Status Displays

From Change Proposal to Changed Product

Change Request (ECR)

The process starts with a user entering a change request – in a user-optimized SAP form, web form (for example, on the company portal/intranet), or interactive PDF form (with SAP Interactive Forms by Adobe).

As soon as the change request is registered, the system triggers the steps necessary for evaluation. According to the previously defined process, it requests the compulsory documents (for example, on technical feasibility, impact on logistics, financial consequences, etc.), submits them to the people responsible for evaluation and approval, and gives notice when new information or documents have become available.
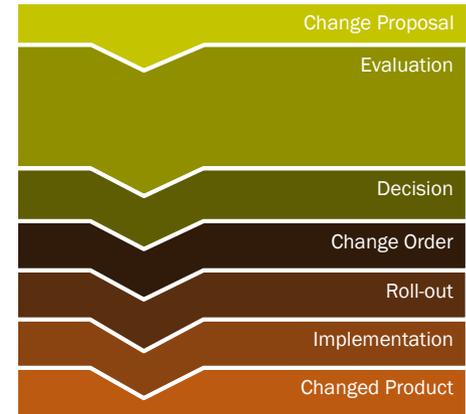
Change Order (ECO)

Once a change request has been approved and all necessary documents have been submitted, the change order process starts. Multiple change requests for one product can be combined into one change order.

The change order process ensures that the measures defined in the change request are implemented throughout the company. This includes, for example, communicating new drawings or recipes, adapting standard operating procedure, preparing production changeover, and much more.

The system also manages the final change control in accordance with the company's quality assurance guidelines. Only once all the written procedures, process conditions and test requirements have been met is the change order successfully completed.

Implementation

With the reorganization and changeover of production completed, the modified product is available and the change order is closed. This is reflected in the SAP system through updated material masters (with or without reference to the change numbers), plant-specific BOMs, and drawings.

Change Proposal
Evaluation
Decision
Change Order
Roll-out
Implementation
Changed Product

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Features

One platform for everything

» Central, location-independent access to tasks and documents
» Fully SAP-based, integrates seamlessly into your company's existing SAP infrastructure
» Immediate access to all SAP transactions and objects, with connection to the SAP modules (QM, MM, PLM...)
» Works with original SAP data, thus always up-to-date, without data synchronization or replication
» High process transparency
» Structured display of the change process and of related documents in the change file
» Dynamic file: structure expands automatically as the process continues
» Tracking of the process progress with status display for files, documents, (sub)processes, and tasks
» Note function for creating ongoing permanent notes on files and documents

Efficient process control

» Change cockpit with direct access to change files, comprehensive search, fast entry of change requests, and much more
» High flexibility in adjusting file views and process templates, to optimally cater to company standards and special requirements
» Flexible task management: standard processes can be complemented by individual, situational ad hoc workflows
» Deadline monitoring for all tasks
» Assignment of tasks via SAP workflow and e-mail
» Documents and tasks can be sent by e-mail direct from the file

Collaboration

» File access for occasional users via Web interface
» Standardized data exchange with internal and external partners using SAP cFolders or SAP Interactive Forms by Adobe
» Integration of Microsoft Office, Microsoft Outlook, Lotus Notes, and Windows file system
» Requests and measures can be entered using SAP Interactive Forms by Adobe or Web forms

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About xft

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SAP® Certified
Powered by SAP NetWeaver®

SAP® Certified
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Who we are

xft is a growing SAP partner company specializing in the integration and optimization of business processes in SAP. We create our own software products based on SAP NetWeaver and complement them with individual, customer-specific solutions. Our SAP expertise and our solid technical and industry knowledge attract a range of customers from medium-sized companies to international publicly traded companies in almost every industry sector.

What we do

We provide a central access point to all relevant business and process information (documents, e-mails, or electronic records), fully integrated within the process context. Our products include all types of record management solutions, from digital personnel files, invoice management and contract management to project and change management in production. In the background, xft basic components manage business processes and maintain connections with other systems.

What makes us special

xft distinguishes itself through its close relationship with SAP, in terms of expertise, location, and professional ties. The founders of xft worked in the major development departments of the Walldorf-based software giant for many years. As an official SAP partner, we offer solutions directly within the SAP context. Many well-known sales and implementation partners include xft products in their solution portfolios.