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International SAP Master Data Project:
Automated SAP master data maintenance for Südzucker

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The company

SÜDZUCKER

The Südzucker Group is a leading company in the food industry with more than 100 production sites worldwide. The company is divided into four business areas: sugar, specialties, CropEnergies, and fruit. In fiscal year 2019/20 (March 1, 2019 to February 29, 2020), it generated consolidated sales of around EUR 6.7 billion. In the traditional sugar sector, Südzucker is the largest supplier of sugar products in Europe. Sugar is the core business for the group's four divisions. Each year, the company processes around 28 million tons of sugar beets in 23 sugar factories and two refineries, producing around 4.5 million tons of sugar for Europe and the global market.

With the SAP add-on MDC Master Data Cockpit from valantic, the Mannheim-based company has now managed to create consistent, transparent processes in the material master system across several companies, with reduced throughput times and significantly reduced IT expenses. Data quality was also ensured by the now-automated maintenance of master data in SAP.

Foto: Wilhelm Dürr / Südzucker

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Foto: Dennis Möbus / Südzucker

The initial situation

As an international company with different segments, each of which has very specific requirements, SAP master data management posed a particular challenge. In the sugar segment alone, the group has ten companies in different EU countries whose article master data was supposed to be managed centrally.

Previously, the handling of the most important processes was based on the experience of individual people. Overall, there was a lack of product life cycle management that provided all the necessary information and documented needs cleanly. This made the topic of "improved master data quality and up-to-dateness" increasingly important for the company.

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An overview of the project: Master data project starts for finished products in the sugar segment

Südzucker presented clearly-defined requirements: Throughput times should be reduced, errors reduced, and as much maintenance as possible done by the specialist departments themselves. In addition, there was a desire to establish a documentation database and a lean solution with calculable, reduced IT costs. The new tool should be easy and intuitive for everyone to use and require no long introduction phase or high training costs. It quickly became clear that it would not be possible to fulfill these expectations with the SAP standard alone. The choice was finally made to use the MDC Master Data Cockpit add-on, which was fully integrated into SAP by SAP Gold Partner valantic.

The solution was initially rolled out for finished products in the sugar segment in Germany. Johannes Kapper, Project Manager, Product Manager, who was formerly responsible for master data management at Südzucker, explains: "We wanted to start with a pilot project in one small business area. The implementation was supposed to be quick and the solution well and independently scalable."

Foto: Wilhelm Dürr / Südzucker

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Foto: Luftbildfotografie Niederbayern

Pilot implemented on time and on budget with little effort

As Südzucker was implementing other IT projects at the same time, only limited resources were available for the MDC start-up project. It was also necessary to take into account that several Südzucker companies with a very large number of production and outsourcing sites within and outside of Europe are managed with a single ERP system. This sometimes made the process of

"The one-step production of new finished products through all relevant production and sales companies and their locations represents a huge labor saving."

Johannes Kapper
Product Manager and Project Manager of the SAP master data project at Südzucker

material master creation very complex. This is precisely where the MDC was able to significantly relieve the burden on its employees and simplify the process.

Furthermore, the ease of use was appreciated. "You don't have to be a computer scientist to operate the MDC properly," says Kapper. Colleagues from the specialist departments understood this right away.

In the end, the project team at Südzucker was not only won over by the tool itself, but also by the valantic consultants' approach to implementation. "The introduction into the functionality of the tool was very efficient with a small project team in concentrated workshops," explains Johannes Kapper. "The valantic consulting team helped us formulate what was really necessary. Everything went smoothly in the implementation. Promises were kept at all times. This enabled us to successfully implement the pilot project for the sugar segment Germany with just a small team with comparatively little effort in terms of time and budget," explains the project manager.

Foto: Wilhelm Dürr / Südzucker

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Solutions & results

- Integrated, transparent processes in the material master system across several companies

- Reduced throughput times

- Significantly reduced IT expenses

- Improved data quality thanks to automated master data maintenance

"Our large number of production and outsourcing sites with some individual and changing needs was difficult to handle. Thanks to the Master Data Cockpit, their requirements are now not only well-documented, but can always be kept up-to-date by the specialist department with minimal effort," sums up Johannes Kapper. Overall, the cost of the new material systems has been reduced enormously.

In the following months, the use of the MDC for finished products could be rolled out in stages for the entire sugar segment.
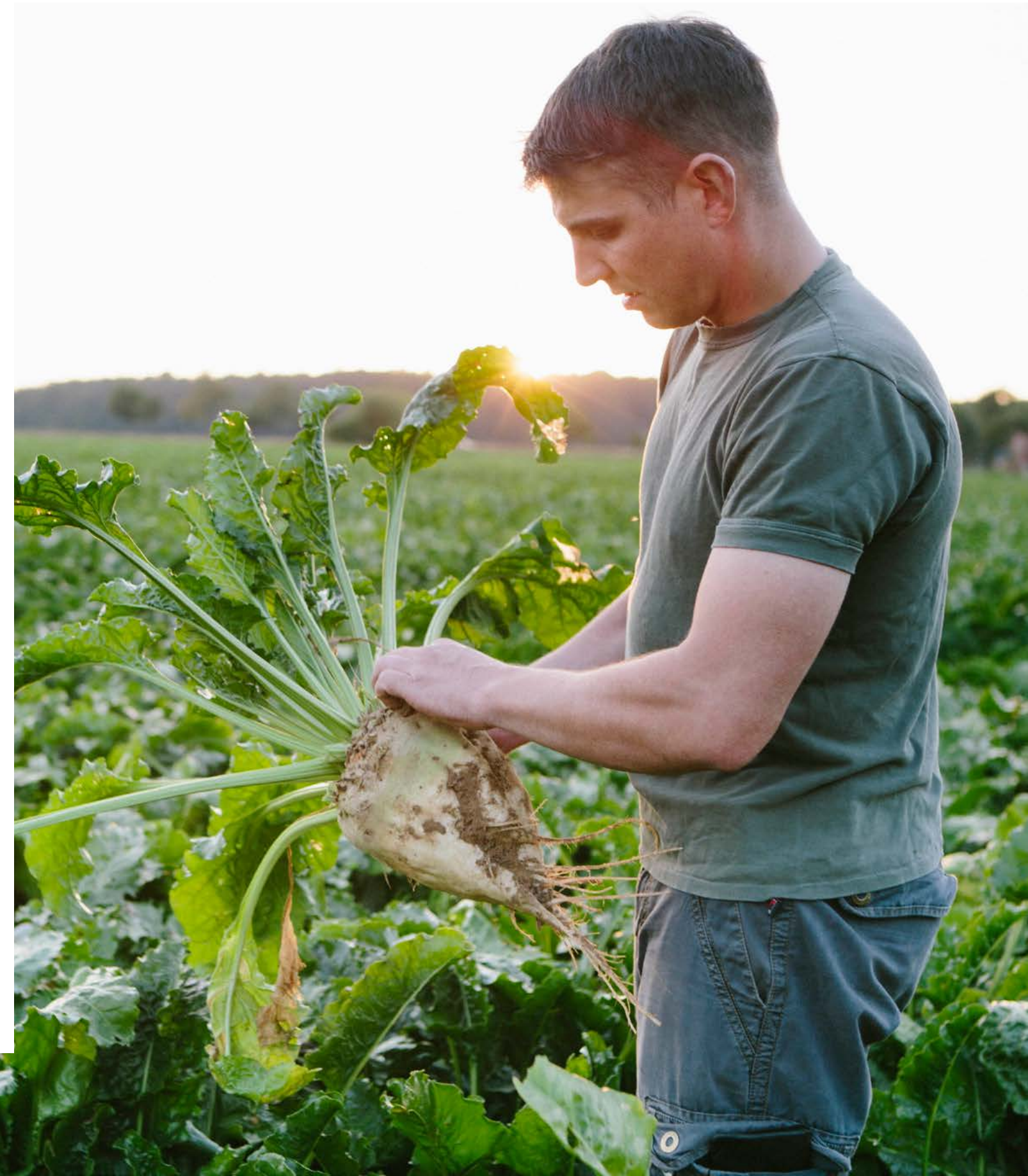
Foto: Calton on Unsplash

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Outlook

Due to the consistently positive experience and great acceptance of the master data solution after the successful start-up project, additional Südzucker companies could and will be successfully integrated. Use is also being considered in other departments, as well as for companies in other segments within the Südzucker Group.

"The new function of the mass-scale article master system opens up completely new possibilities and makes it all the more interesting for other group divisions. We look forward to additional expansion and optimization possibilities."

Christopher Laysy
Team Business Process Development and responsible for
material master data management at Südzucker

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About the Südzucker Group

Südzucker is an important company in the food industry with its sugar, specialties, CropEnergies, and fruit segments. In the traditional sugar sector, the group is Europe's largest supplier of sugar products, with 23 sugar factories and two refineries – from France in the west to Belgium, Germany, Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Hungary, Bosnia, and Moldova in the East. The specialties segment, with its functional ingredients for food and feed (BENEO), frozen/refrigerated products (Freiberger), starch and portion products (PortionPack Europe) sectors, is active on dynamic growth markets. The CropEnergies segment comprises ethanol activities in Germany, Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom. With its fruit segment, the group is active worldwide; it is a world market leader in fruit products and a leader in fruit juice concentrates in Europe.

With 19,200 employees, the company achieved sales of EUR 6.7 million in 2019/20.
www.suedzucker.de/en

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About valantic SAP Services

As SAP Gold Partner, SAP Cloud Focus Partner, and SAP Extended Business Member, the valantic SAP Services division is a complete provider for the optimization of all processes along companies' value-creation chains. With SAP solutions and the consulting and valantic's consulting and implementation expertise, companies become intelligent enterprises thanks to continuously and intelligently networked processes with processes optimally oriented toward the customer journey. From the development of SAP strategy to implementation, the operation of SAP systems and license sales, valantic helps its customers in a wide variety of industries digitalize their company processes. The SAP portfolio includes SAP S/4 HANA, SAP Digital Supply Chain, SAP Customer Experience, SAP Finance, SAP Human Capital management (HCM), and SAP Analytics. In addition, valantic offers its own SAP add-ons for the areas of finance, human capital management (HCM), logistics, document, contract and license management, and security, as well as master data and authorization management.

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