

Otto Bock relies on Quanos Content Solutions



Quanos
Content Solutions

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Otto Bock HealthCare GmbH is a modern, success-oriented medical technology company with a long history: a global brand with local roots. Since its beginning 85 years ago it has been helping people with handicaps to achieve a higher quality of life. Products by Otto Bock, such as prostheses, wheelchairs or orthoses, are available worldwide. By consistently applying innovative technologies, the products were improved continuously, helping to increase mobility. As the products became more and more complex, the volume of the corresponding documentation grew apace, thus steadily increasing translation volume. The implementation of the editing and content management system SCHEMA ST4 and the language technology Across Language Server saved the company from ever-growing translation costs.

Otto Bock reduces translation effort with Quanos und Across

The medical technology company Otto Bock HealthCare is the flagship of the Otto Bock group, and has been on a stable course of growth for years. In 2010, the Otto Bock group had over 5000 employees worldwide, with total revenue of 629 million euros. Global company activities are coordinated from headquarters in Duderstadt.

The Otto Bock product portfolio currently encompasses 28,000 items, from prostheses, orthoses, and wheelchairs, to neurostimulation devices which act on the nervous system with electrical impulses, helping to train and reestablish everyday functional movements. A total of 2,500 instruction guides need to be created and kept up to date, as well as translated into 17 to 24 languages. Depending on the type, e.g. patient information, operating or service manuals, the documents can run anywhere from two to 250 pages. „In 2010 alone we translated 7.5 million words,” Arno Schmidt, Manager for Technical Communication at Otto Bock HealthCare GmbH, says concretely. All instructions are available as PDF or on CD or in printed form.

Decentralized workflows lead to delays and lack of transparency

Two editing teams are responsible for documentation, one in Vienna and one at the headquarters in Duderstadt. „In the Vienna office, the editors received information from product management and coordinated it for the products developed there. Here in Duderstadt, the product managers created the documentation themselves. Our department then transferred all the documentation into InDesign,” explains Arno Schmidt.

His team, comprising 14 members today, is also in charge of translation management. Service providers translate the largest portion, and only

the proofreading is done by local offices in the various countries.

The decentralized processes lead to different workflows and result in a loss of consistency and frequent delays. The biggest problem, however, was the continuous increase in translation volume. „Our product portfolio is growing steadily, and this of course means that the amount of user guides grows as well,” explains Arno Schmidt. „The translation costs were eating us up, so our goal was to control growth.”

Module-Based writing results in less translation effort

It quickly became clear that the use of a translation management system alone would not be able to exploit enough of the improvement potential. „The main point is to realize the potential for cost savings and simplification at the point of text creation, and to organize this process together with the subsequent translation. The company intended to achieve this potential by creating modular documentation, analogous to product manufacturing. Editors chose from a pool of text modules with standardized wording and assembled these into documentation. For the various processes to run more quickly and, above all, more consistently in the relevant departments, the workflows were analyzed extensively and then redesigned.



The organization was changed so that technical editors now take the information received from product management, for example, and create translation-compatible text modules that can be managed in an editingsystem. Text is thus consistent and reliable, and duplicate translations are prevented. The product manager no longer has to write texts himself, he just needs to review whether the wording chosen by the editors is correct.

In order to evaluate the various applications, requirements definition documents were created, and appropriate manufacturers were invited to present their solutions. This made it possible to explore together with the providers how each system would successfully meet the requirements. Integration architecture, implementing processes, and exporting files for creating PDFs were discussed as well. The discussions resulted in assessments of the whole picture, including the interaction of the various systems. On this basis, together with external consultants, the decision was made for SCHEMA ST4 as editing system and for Across Language Server as language technology.

Training and instruction for the editors followed. They had to change their accustomed way of writing and adhere to the principle of modular text creation. "This was a process that took its time, and even today sometimes it leads to discussions," explains Schmidt. Every four weeks, video conferences are held in order to agree on guidelines and unification of processes. The decisions that are made are added to the continuously growing editors' manual. SCHEMA ST4 offers standard functionality for creating and maintaining editors' manuals. With the start of the project at Otto Bock, a new structure for the manual was defined, itself based on modular text creation. It is divided into editing, layout, graphics, terminology, and translation guidelines.

Achieving cost savings through cooperation of editing system and translation management

With the implementation of the editing system, editors' processes changed significantly. Instead of creating text in InDesign, they now write in MS Word. The Language Server displays existing wording and text suggestions to be reused. Most significantly, if editors use different phrases, Otto Bock's agreed terminology is displayed.

"In this context, it is important that the agreed processes between the editing system and the translation system run harmoniously. There is no use in spending a lot of effort implementing the editing system properly when the information exported to the translation system can't be imported again into my variant in SCHEMA ST4."

Finally, the processes were implemented in SCHEMA ST4 and Across Language Server. Some system customization was needed in order for processes to run seamlessly. "As planned, we finished the project at the end of 2010," says Arno Schmidt. "And now we have a unified workflow in the editing department for new documents that are created in the editing system. If we would have continued to work with the previous process, the translation costs would not have been manageable any longer."



Projekt-Highlights

- Seamless integration of SCHEMA ST4 with Across Language Server
- Automated workflow
- Consistent translation-compatible text creation
- Documentation for 28.000 items in up to 24 languages
- Creation and maintenance of the editors' manual with SCHEMA ST4

