



## **Abstract**

Il documento mostra una panoramica delle soluzioni di e-Business applicate ai settori commerciali.

Si accennera' ai vantaggi che le SMEs potranno registrare con l'adozione di strumenti di e-Business (grazie ad esempio all'uso di sistemi elettronici nella gestione interna dell'azienda, all'adozione di Internet, di Marketing ed e-Commerce). Verranno anche presi in considerazione gli ambiti dell'E-Procurement, non ancora cosi diffuso, ma con enormi potenzialita' nel campo della gestione aziendale (esempio di buona pratica in Baden-Württemberg con "Koncraft") e della "Pianificazione delle Risorse d'Impresa" (ERP) con le linea guida per un migliore utilizzo della stessa (best practices nella nostra regione come ad esempio Open Craft-con tool gratuiti per operazioni di calcolo, gestione e regolamentazione di orari e tempi per i dipendenti).

In conclusione verra presentata una sitografia che spazia da una letteratura generale sull'argomento a una visione piu' focalizzata sull'e-Business nel Baden-Württemberg.

## **E-Business and trade**

### **1. Electronic data processing in the trade sector**

Electronic data processing is useful for almost every company regardless of the number of employees. Four out of ten companies already use industry specific software.

#### **1.1. Advantages of software use:**

- Optimize workflows,
- Calculating cross company costs for resources and working hours,
- Follow-up offers made to customers and calculate the marginal income,
- Combine all costs electronically.

### **2. The Internet**

#### **2.1. Prospects of the internet:**

- More and more companies present their offerings on the internet,
- Internet means an individual, location- and time-independent information source for all customers.
- 

#### **2.2. Advantages through using the internet as marketing platform**

- Offering added values to the customers,
- Easier cooperation and communication with other companies,
- Opportunity for rationalise work,
- Optimising business processes like order transactions,
  - Focusing on customer orientation, the service and offers of a company can be - expanded through the internet presence.
- 

#### **2.3. Additional feature: Mobile PCs:**

Especially in case of the trade sector the use of mobile PCs means enormous advantages for employees and customers. When using mobile PCs during installations and customer calls the tradesman is able to easily communicate with the headquarter and quickly solve even complex problems.

### **3. E-Commerce:**

The advantages of the distribution of manual service through the internet are to extend the market radius and to open up new customer groups for the company.

#### **3.1. Best-practice of e-commerce:**

- 1.3.1. Outrider of e-commerce is the automotive industry: Already 25 % of the companies in this sector use e-commerce for selling their products e.g. new or second hand cars!
- 1.3.2. Bakers and pastry cooks extended their product range by offering "photo cakes". The customers can send their pictures via e-mail and choose the flavour, toppings and appearance of the cake with their picture on top. Booking a scheduled delivery service is additionally possible.

## 4. E-Procurement

E-Procurement, the acquisition through the internet, is used only by a few companies today. Most of the e-procurement workflows are supported by special software through which a complete automatic acquisition is possible.

### 4.1. Advantages of E-Procurement

- Time saving,
- Minimizing transportation costs,
- Better possibilities of comparison,
- Possibility of buying cheaper materials of higher quality,
- Choice of buying through an electronic marketplace or buying directly from the salesman who is listed at the local e-procurement system.

### 4.2. Best practice

Several carpenter companies in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg/Germany made a virtual cooperation under the name "Koncraft". All product and company information is administrated on a collective server. All companies have access to all datas. The daily information exchange is done via e-mail and also customer and other requests are forwarded to the companies via e-mail This division of labour enables the companies to develop projects that would normally overstrain a single company capacity.

## 5. Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

The process of budgeting capital, human resources and other capital equipment as efficient as possible is mostly supported by a specific ERP-software. This software is used to get higher output and optimized processes with the same amount of employees.

### 5.1. Typical areas of operation of ERP-softwares in a company:

- Accountancy
- Production
- Warehousing and acquisition
- Sales
- Controlling
- Human Resources Management

### 5.2. Seven guidelines for using and implementing an ERP-software:

### **2.5.1. Reasonable use of ERP-software**

The size and strategic orientation of the company are the most important criterias for the decision whether or not to use a ERP-software

In general companies with 10 and more employees can support and optimize standard procedures via ERP-software without increasing the number of employees most efficiently.

Nevertheless it is useful for each company to use ERP-software to budget ressources efficiently.

### **2.5.2. Individual, ready-made or sectoral solution ERP-software**

Usually all providers offer a basis software covering all standart business procedures. Additionaly there are branch specific solutions or customer specific individual programming for an optimal support of particular processes.

### **2.5.3. Selection**

The largest provider of branch specific ERP-software are the companies Sage KHK, Moser or PDS. Also there are many providers offering individuall programming solutions. It is highly recommended to ask for a demo-version of the software before buying it!

### **2.5.4. Acquisition and attendance costs**

For each workstation the company has to face average costs of 1.000 to 2.000 Euros for acquire the software. As well there will be attendance costs of 15 to 20 per cent of the acquisition costs per year.

An alternative to buying the software is to lease or rent it from the provider. But there must be broad calculations in advance to assess the financial operating expenses.

### **2.5.5. Open Sourde ERP-software**

The advantages of open ERP-software is that there are no licences to cover and the administrative effort is marginal. But one have to keep in mind that each user has access to the software and there are no specific user categories to licence. Also there might be e.g some articles missing. Examples for open-source ERP-softwares are AVERP [www.synerpy.de](http://www.synerpy.de) or Open Craft [www.open.craft.org](http://www.open.craft.org)

Best-practice Open Craft:

The Open Craft program was developed by the German carpenter Claus Müller who wanted to have a economic alternativ to the expensive ERP-softwares. Basing on the open source software StarOffice 5.0 (alternative to Microsoft Office) he programmed several tabulations for precalculating and follow-up offers and having an electronical and easy to handle overview of all employees working time. Open-Craft is a program that is especially useful for very small companies to save working time and doing automatic calculations for all standard procedures.

### **2.5.6. Time need for the implementation**

For the whole process of implementing the software, a company should calculate about six to eight months, beginning from the decision to the

implementing of the systems. Also one have to keep in mind the time for the training on the job of all employees.

### **2.5.7. Avoiding problems**

Most problems emerge from not including the employees in the process of implementation. It's important for their motivation and understanding to actively embed the employees as soon as possible in the processes. The management should give clear and concrete instructions.

## **6. Further information and consultancy**

### **6.1. Information on the Internet**

- [www.ebigo.de](http://www.ebigo.de)
- [www.softguide.de](http://www.softguide.de)
- [www.bm-online.de](http://www.bm-online.de)
- [www.handwerksportal.newcome.de](http://www.handwerksportal.newcome.de)
- [www.itb-software.de](http://www.itb-software.de)
- [www.open-craft.org](http://www.open-craft.org)

### **6.2. Personal Consultancy**

EEC Stuttgart-Heilbronn [www.eec-stuttgart.de](http://www.eec-stuttgart.de)

ELCO suedwest „Innovation und Umwelt“ [www.karlsruhe.ihk.de](http://www.karlsruhe.ihk.de)

KECos [www.kecos.de](http://www.kecos.de)

KeRN [www.kern.ihk.de](http://www.kern.ihk.de)