

Stockholm, Sweden based SCA, a €11.4 billion (US\$16.5 billion) global consumer goods and paper company, develops, produces and markets personal care products, tissue, packaging solutions, publication papers and solid-wood products. With over 50,000 employees in more than 50 countries, SCA serves markets in Europe, North America, Latin America, Asia and Australasia.

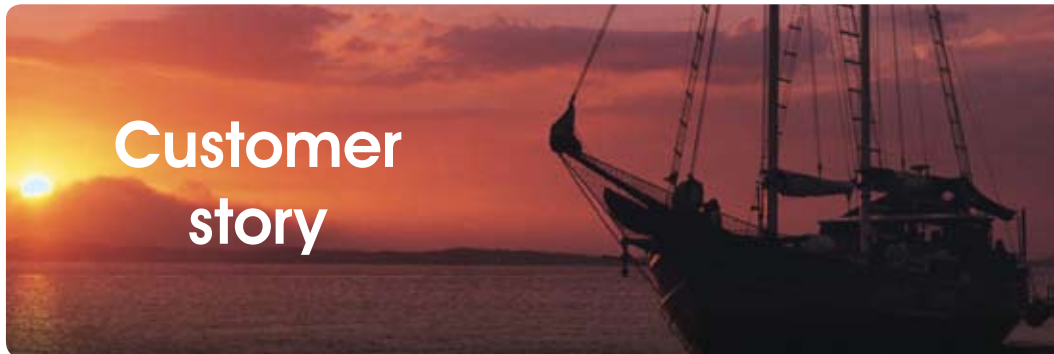
Coordinating a Giant

With active operations on every inhabited continent involved in the manufacture, shipping and marketing of a wide range of high-volume goods, SCA faced some serious technical challenges. Its business processes were well established in every geographical area, but as the company standardized to a global SAP-based business information system, it found it needed to more tightly manage and coordinate IT activities between regions.

"We all use the same system globally – for example, Sweden and the USA are on the same system, just using different clients," explains Dirk Hermann, Manager Quality Assurance. "They all were on the same infrastructure, so we had a situation in which, for example, our internal or external consultants in Germany might work on a transport during the day and then schedule it to be imported into the production landscape automatically overnight, not thinking that the teams in the U.S. were just starting work at that time. So in the U.S. they'd go to work on their own projects, not realizing that transports were simultaneously being imported into production from Europe. Their work would collide with what Europe was doing overnight, and users would get kicked off the system or whole areas would simply stop functioning correctly."

If they could solve the transport control challenge they would also solve the problem of system "dumps" due to transport collisions. During a dump, a required program would not run because of inconsistency or missing tables of definitions, among other reasons. With manual change management, a necessary transport may be forgotten, or may have been accidentally misrouted, or might be overwriting a newer transport scheduled to be imported by another team. The resulting problems would have to be sorted out later, expending unbudgeted resources, since they hadn't been prevented in the first place.

SCA's team decided that an integrated change control solution to enforce business processes and coordinate system-wide importation of area team transports and projects might solve these technical challenges. The goal was to enable smooth, reliable operation as the



company continued to expand and extend its systems.

Setting the Challenge

Tasked to clearly define the boundaries of the IT challenge in order to enable an informed search for solutions, the IT team determined specific criteria for the required transport coordination and change control solution. It must –

- Improve SCA's control over change management in the affected SAP-based systems
- Do so efficiently, and not increase the burden on available IT resources
- Replace the current "home-grown" workflow system and, in the process, eliminate manual steps in controlling transports and managing change
- If possible, support additional stacks and control the flow of transports involved in non-ABAP development projects.

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Dirk Hermann, Manager Quality Assurance, Customer Competence Centre

Finding the Solution

The search was led by Anders Corneliusson, Director, Infrastructure Development. As his team surveyed the market, they learned of Rev-Trac, by Revelation Software Concepts, through connections with a company using that solution in Australia. After examining other available change control solutions including Solution Manager, SCA determined that Rev-Trac would provide the most comprehensive answer to their challenges.

Corneliusson, who decided on the final recommendation, reasoned that Rev-Trac was mature, fully integrated with the larger SAP-based infrastructure, and certified by SAP itself. As a partner firm of SAP, RSC would not be stepping into an unfamiliar environment or layering new problems on top of the old. In addition, Rev-Trac was the only solution that would satisfy the requirement for control of non-ABAP transports without manual intervening steps or added resource drain.

What finally settled the issue was discovering that Rev-Trac would be easy to implement and would require no additional development work by the team itself.

The Implementation

Having decided on Rev-Trac, in early 2008 SCA's IT team began the implementation process. First, it applied Rev-Trac to the core systems. Then SCA began steadily expanding use of Rev-Trac to new IT clients and new organizational areas throughout the infrastructure.



Hermann, who led the project to integrate Rev-Trac into all of SCA's SAP-based systems, explains that the initial setup focused on the different business groups and started with the main SAP R/3 system. Then they rolled it out from there, bringing in all the other systems. The roll-out was still in process at the end of summer, 2008, but Hermann said it was painless during the entire period.

"The implementation was very straightforward," remarks Hermann. "We only needed about two days of training by RSC and we were able to set it up ourselves."

As the implementation proceeded, the teams found that Rev-Trac acted as a catalyst for SCA's different operational units to "fine tune" their internal processes. As a result, they were able to implement real change management, with full documentation, auditable approvals and everything else the process implies. It was a natural outcome of implementing system-wide Rev-Trac change control, Hermann says.

Rev-Trac in Practice

Since implementing Rev-Trac in key systems, coordinating change transports between teams and groups no longer presents a problem at SCA.

"With Rev-Trac we have complete control over critical transports – Rev-Trac notifies us when conflicts may occur so we avoid emergencies entirely," says Hermann. "Rev-Trac prevents the system throwing out users and we have much more control over our transports. We find it easy now to spread transports between systems and clients, and we never have someone importing manually at the same time as someone else. Rev-Trac solves this problem entirely."

He cites implementation of a new HR client as an example of Rev-Trac's change management in practice. "We had a new client in HR and had to migrate other HR clients into it – with Rev-Trac we could do it all automatically, not have to import the new clients manually. So it was no load on the staff."



He adds, "Now we have much better reporting on the system. We know who is doing what, over which change management issue. We can take care of these changes without a lot of hassles at all. Rev-Trac solves a lot of hassles during the merger of different clients into the larger system."

As a side benefit of "tuning" the internal organization processes and controlling migration of change, the team found that Rev-Trac, by enforcing policies and standardizing the change control process, substantially increases the system's flexibility. When evolving systems and changing business requirements impact SCA's process, the team can bring in the needed changes faster.

The whole change control process is more trouble-free with Rev-Trac, Hermann reports. "Before Rev-Trac, when we imported transports automatically over the weekends, the whole back chain would sometimes stop because nobody knew something wasn't working," Hermann explains. "With Rev-Trac we can put somebody on BASIS 'on call' and they can react immediately when Rev-Trac notifies them of a problem. We no longer have to start the new week expecting to face problems that cropped up over the weekend."

Rev-Trac has all but eliminated "dumps" due to uncoordinated, out of sequence or colliding transports, says Hermann. And as SCA's systems continue to evolve to meet new needs, Rev-Trac enables agile, flexible responses across all systems without concern for what used to be inevitable collisions, overwrites, and coordination problems. Now all transports are automatically forced into the correct containers, sequencing and related problems no longer occur, transports are never mixed up, and system changes have become manageable.

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Working with RSC

Hermann says when problems do occur in the system, they are solved much more readily with Rev-Trac, partly because of RSC's customer support approach. As the implementation became integrated into the normal processes of change at SCA, the teams found they needed very little direct support – but support was always fast and on-point when they did request it.

"We had a lot of contact in the first few weeks," says Hermann, "but even with the time difference from Europe to Australia we always had our answers the next morning and 99.9% of our questions were answered in the first exchange. For example, we had some Unicode problems in the transports at first and with RSC's help we solved it in a very short period of time."

He adds that, unlike huge companies with thousands of employees – "they can make

you wait for days and years to get an answer," he says – at RSC "the guys know what they are talking about. When we ask a question we know we'll get a fast, accurate answer."

The Bottom Line on Benefits

Implementing Rev-Trac has brought significant benefits to SCA at both the technical and the business levels, Corneliusson says.

From a technical standpoint, synchronization has become possible between systems and cloning one system to another has become a painless and practical tactic. In addition, SCA has gained fine-tuned control over changes to various critical objects so unexpected results have become a nuisance of the past.



In business terms, Corneliusson says, the improved quality of change delivery means the system experiences fewer disturbances, running smoothly and reliably even in times of major project introduction. In addition, full compliance during audits of change management processes are now the expected norm, eliminating audit-related drains of company resources and allowing business to go forward without any system-related problems.

Moving Forward

"Rev-Trac has become a key consideration in planning SCA's future system evolution," said Corneliusson. "We are planning to implement Java and perhaps other non-ABAP components into our XI landscape," he notes. "We knew we'd need to deal eventually with the ability to handle Java, and Rev-Trac's ability to handle mixed transports was a factor in our decision to adopt RSC's technology. Future implementations of that sort will be much more trouble-free with Rev-Trac in place."

As the needs of SCA's business and information systems continue to evolve, Rev-Trac will continue to smooth the way for the company's crucial IT teams and systems.

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Now you're really in control

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