

German Postal Service – Deutsche Post implements iET Solutions Configuration Management Database

Deutsche Post has 500,000 employees working in 220 countries across five continents. With the logistics competence of the brands DHL, Deutsche Post and Postbank, the Deutsche Post World Net offers a broad spectrum of integrated services and customized solutions for the management and transport of goods, information and financial transactions.

In Germany, the services concerning written communications, marketing, outsourcing and system solutions for mail are bundled under the brand Deutsche Post.

Optimization and Improved Control with Key Performance Indicators and Analysis

Toward the end of 2006, the Deutsche Post established key indicators to evaluate the data quality of the Configuration Management Database (CMDB) and identify inconsistencies in the stored information. As a result, vulnerabilities in the process were identified and steps toward improvement were taken.

The Deutsche Post outsources part of its IT services to T-Systems, who manages order management and accounting systems for Deutsche Post. To support the implementation of IT service management processes according to the ITIL® Best Practice, T-Systems agreed to provide the CMDB to Deutsche Post. As part of the outsourcing contract, the development, implementation and operation of the CMDB were contractually specified all the way down to the configuration items and the associated detailed information.

The CMDB provides information about the following items:

- ▶ IT services, hardware and software components
- ▶ orders, products, invoices
- ▶ events: changes, problems, incidents, SLA data
- ▶ users, cost centers,
- ▶ organizational units and locations.

Cost relevant data coming from the order and accounting systems are fed into the CMDB, and then used for cost allocation between Deutsche Post and T-Systems, as well as for internal cost allocation.

Additionally, this data serves commercial inventory management, as well as license management systems.

Ernst Langner, project leader for the introduction of the CMDB at Deutsche Post states: "We have high standards for the data integrity in the CMDB. Deutsche Post must be able to rely on the accuracy and completeness of the information stored. If this were not possible, the data couldn't be used, for instance, for cost allocation. For us, the quality of the CMDB is crucial."

Evaluation and Definition of Key Performance Indicators

The Infrastructure Management Shared Services (IMS) department of the Deutsche Post is the interface between T-Systems and Deutsche Post business units including Mail, DHL, Retail and Global Business Services. In accordance with T-Systems, the department adjusts content, as well as the CMDB structure, depending on changing business requirements. Therefore, it is critically important to ensure the quality of the content at all times.

BENEFITS FOR DEUTSCHE POST

- ▶ Regular key indicator measurement
- ▶ Trend analysis of key indicators
- ▶ Consistent data in the CMDB
- ▶ Transfer of cost relevant data in the CMDB
- ▶ Higher acceptance of the CMDB

THE SOLUTION AT A GLANCE

- ▶ CMDB operated by external IT service provider
- ▶ Reporting solution for defining and measuring key indicators
- ▶ Client for data output and reports

“Based on discrepancies that we detected between our asset management system and the previous CMDB in 2006, we initiated a quality assurance measurement of the CMDB,” explained Langner.

“Furthermore, we wanted to increase the internal acceptance of the CMDB and make the quality of the data transparent for our service provider. This would allow us to identify potential optimization, as well objectively measure, track and document any correction and improvement measures that were initiated by T-Systems.”

IMS concluded that the validity of the existing Key Performance Indicators (KPI) with regards to the data quality of CMDB was insufficient. To produce the required quality, the existing key indicators were adjusted, and new key indicators were added as part of the overall project.

Phase 1: Key indicators and Vulnerability Analysis

In cooperation with Kess DV-Beratung, the first step of the project focused on review of existing KPIs and plausibility verifications, as well as analysis of known vulnerabilities in the measurement process. Together with Kess, leveraging and applying ITIL® Best Practices and COBIT, the Deutsche Post team developed the necessary steps to improve existing KPIs. Newly defined KPIs were supported by measurement formulas in the databases. The realization of the CMDB was performed by IT service management solution provider iET Solutions.

Michael Zwick, project leader at KESS DV-Beratung, explains: “The cooperation of all participating companies was especially important for defining and implementing the required KPIs within the given time period.”

Process Control based on Key Indicators

With defined key indicators, the Deutsche Post is now able to check the effectiveness and efficiency of processes, and review whether all data that had to be changed was actually changed, and if the changes were done correctly. The actual maintenance of the data is verified via cross checks within the CMDB.

For example, queries such as “Any installed computers without an operating system?” can show if the data fields contain plausible data and correct relationships. When a change is completed, a check is performed to see if the appropriate configuration item or component has been updated accordingly.

Ernst Langner explains: “As part of plausibility, we check if an invoice has an appropriate order of established CI, which would justify the cost allocation.”

Phase 2: Implementation of KPI Tool

In the second phase of the project, the defined key indicators were technically implemented in the CMDB and the reporting system was automated. For reporting, a tool was implemented consisting of a KPI-tool for definition and measurements; and a KPI-client for Excel-based data output. More than 100 values are generated a week, and then condensed to Key Performance Indicators. Currently, the Deutsche Post analyzes six KPIs.

The measurements occur via automated SQL-queries directly in the database. With the KPI tool, SQL queries can be easily defined and customized, while additional measurements can be added at any time. Furthermore, the KPI tool assigns values to the categories, and one of three potential phases of verification, planning and control.

The data output occurs via the Excel-based client, which condenses the values to KPIs and displays them as a set of signals. A drill-down with more details is possible for each KPI. A history graphically displays up to 26 measurements for each value in the past. With this trend analysis, the Deutsche Post can assess the current situation, and observe the development of the data quality of the CMDB.

“We can already say today that we achieved a significant quality improvement with this initiative. We can act much more proactively than before, so that problems can’t even develop,” concludes Ernst Langer’s summary.

ABOUT DEUTSCHE POST

The Deutsche Post and DHL corporate brands offer a one-of-a-kind portfolio of logistics (DHL) and communications (Deutsche Post) services. The Group provides its customers with both easy to use standardized products as well as innovative and tailored solutions ranging from dialog marketing to industrial supply chains.

www.dp-dhl.com

ABOUT iET SOLUTIONS

Building on more than 20 years of industry expertise, iET Solutions, a division of UNICOM® Global, is recognized as a leading global provider of IT Service Management (ITSM) and Software Asset Management (SAM) solutions for mid-size and large enterprises. Over 51,000 users in 26 countries partner with iET Solutions to drive the success of their IT operations and infrastructure.

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