



Lawson Helps Olympus Gain Focus on Operations

After the successful implementation of the Lawson M3 system in 2000, the international company is making good progress towards centralized operations.

When the name Olympus is mentioned, one automatically thinks of cameras of all shapes and values. But there is much more to the company than that. Olympus is one of the leading manufacturers of professional, optical and digital products for not only the commercial and leisure sectors, but also for medicine, science and industry.

The roots of the global company go back to the beginning of the 20th century and the Olympus Corporation in Japan. In 1963, the European headquarters of Olympus Europa GmbH was founded in Hamburg. Today, the subsidiary of the Japanese company has more than 50 sales, service and production companies in nearly every European country. It has more than 4,800 employees in Europe, and 1,850 in Germany alone. Turnover in the year

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2005/2006 was EUR 1.6 billion. "A stately sum, for which we are unable to take any risks, even in IT," comments Herbert Schaffner, general manager, information systems, Olympus Europa GmbH. "It is not for nothing that we need competent, reliable partners such as Lawson at our side."

A Successful History with Lawson

Olympus' search at the end of the 90s for a standardized enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution for the whole of Europe brought Lawson (formerly Intenia) into the game. Some countries, including Switzerland and Austria, had worked successfully with the Lawson M3 system since 1999. At the time, the general feedback was that a centralized system and consolidated project management could comprehensively cover all the company's requirements.

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In 2000, the company initiated an international project to work out the configuration. In 2001, this solution was rolled out step-by-step in the countries already using Lawson. In 2002, an upgrade was agreed, as the current version was naturally equipped with the latest features and was better supported by the provider. An additional decisive point was that standardization and central control could be implemented in Hamburg. By 2005, the latest version of Lawson M3 had been implemented successfully in all the countries of Europe.

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Olympus and Lawson M3 Work Together in the Operating Theater

Olympus has applied its expertise in producing equipment ranging from precision cameras, to medical optical devices. Today many operations that previously required large incisions can, thanks to endoscopy, be carried out with far smaller cuts. With keyhole technology, just a small cut is sufficient, through which the operator passes a camera with the appropriate endoscope. The instruments are passed into the body through a trocar, and the operation takes place on the screen. The advantage for the patient is that there is sufficiently less scarring on the body, leading to shorter stays in hospital. Olympus is the leading provider of this technology. Operations carried out in this way include laparoscopies, arthroscopies of knee, shoulder or ankle joints, heart surgery, neurosurgery, and much more. This "minimally invasive" surgery has been used from the beginning of the 90s and is increasing in popularity.

The growth experienced in the 2005/2006 financial year, has led to an increase in revenue for Olympus. Today, large hospitals have one or more camera stations with a screen, printer, and other technical equipment, that are worth thousands of dollars. A new endoscope, which serves as the lens, is used for



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each operation. There are clinics in which up to ten arthroscopies are performed each day, including some complicated cases. The doctors must be able to place their full reliance on the technology and quality of these systems, and any slight deviation from normal function requires a technical service.

"For us as a product supplier for hospitals, this means absolute reliability, rapid reaction times and perfect technical implementation," emphasizes Schaffner. "Here, the IT systems are of particular importance. When larger-scale repair work arrives at the central repair shop, we need to know the general data in advance. We implemented this solution using M3."

The Olympus repair shops for endoscopes are located in Hamburg, the Czech Republic and France. If, for example, there is a system defect in Italy which cannot be eliminated by a service technician onsite, then the technician uses the Lawson M3 system to pass the information to the nearest center. As soon as the unit arrives there, the parts required for the repair are waiting for it. This guarantees the minimum turnaround time for customers. This service module was developed together with Lawson according to Olympus' requirements.

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Project EMUC – Creating a Centralized ERP System

"On the path towards even more rapid and secure processes, it soon became clear to us that we would need to consolidate Olympus Europa and that all the national companies must be joined using a central, harmonized ERP system in Hamburg," says Schaffner. He aimed to have control over all the ERP systems from Hamburg from the project start in 2005 to its completion in 2008. The system went live in Germany, Austria and Switzerland at the end of 2006, and Italy and England are due to follow in April 2007.

"Here, a great challenge for us is the organizational implementation of the processes, as the technical operations on the part of Lawson have run perfectly up to now," says Schaffner. "Internally, we still have a lot of challenging work still to do. Many employees must get used to it, but we are sure that we will be able to convert to Java in 2008. Java is not yet appropriate for us at the moment, but in the future it is sure to be the platform for a project of this dimension."



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