

APCOA PARKING



CASE STUDY

Company

APCOA Parking Holdings GmbH

Industry

Parking management

Key figures

- European market leader in parking management
- approx. 1.4 million parking spaces
- Around 5,000 employees
- Annual turnover: approx. €1 bn

Use of CCH Tagetik

Consolidation, Budgeting & Planning

Requirements

- To replace the inventory solution which is no longer maintained
- To introduce a flexible, ERP-independent consolidation and planning system
- To achieve simple data delivery from national subsidiaries

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John Muthmann

Senior IT Architect (MDM & BI),
APCOA PARKING Holdings GmbH

Solution overview

As Europe's largest parking manager, APCOA must meet the requirements of 13 independently operating national subsidiaries in its budgeting and planning processes. As the legacy system no longer offered satisfactory performance, the group switched over to completely new applications. The introduction of CCH Tagetik for planning and consolidation has put APCOA in a position to make many of its own changes and enhancements, creating a high degree of independence. At the same time, it proved possible to dramatically increase system performance.

Initial situation

Over 8,000 locations with a total of around 1.4 million parking spaces: **APCOA is the European market leader in parking management.** The group operates car parks in 13 countries, for example at airports, at hospitals and in numerous city centres. The subsidiaries of the decentralised group employ almost 5,000 people. The APCOA Group is managed from its German headquarters at Stuttgart Airport. The parent holding company also has its headquarters there.

The decentralised structure requires particular flexibility for planning and consolidation processes, since the individual companies are largely self-sufficient in their IT decisions. For example, they use very different ERP systems locally. Monthly, annual and budgetary financial statements are reported directly to the holding company.

These conditions require the central office to be able to take the figures, which are delivered in very different ways, and process them as quickly and straightforwardly as possible, as well as being able to use them for business intelligence processes. When the planning system used for this purpose became increasingly outdated and stopped being maintained, there was an urgent need for action.

Results and benefits

- Introduction of CCH Tagetik as a platform for Budgeting, Planning and Consolidation processes
- Considerable increase in performance
- High degree of independence: adjustments can be made by the user
- Automation by linking to the MDM

New budgeting and planning applications

"At the time, there was a legacy system in operation. Unfortunately, it was causing us fairly large performance problems over time," says Johannes Muthmann, Senior IT Architect (MDM & BI) at APCOA. "Some queries took so long that it was hardly productive to even use it any more. This particularly affected processing in the Business Intelligence division. Stability was also markedly far from optimal in hot planning processes. This went as far as crashes with data loss or non-functioning reporting."

To address this situation, APCOA worked together with the previous manufacturer and implementation partner to evaluate the extent to which expanding and updating the existing system was a potential option. The decision which came out of that process, however, was to make a radical break and introduce completely new budgeting and planning applications. On this basis, a BI/Data Warehouse project was also started.

When calling for tender, besides increased performance and stability, the requirements of the planned system's two largest internal user groups were put front and centre. These were the Group Accounting and Group Controlling departments. Technical requirements and desires for functionalities which were not covered by the old solution dominated the accounting department's requirements. These included both legal necessities and features which were not absolutely necessary but widely desired by the users.

By comparison, Group Controlling had requirements which were easier to implement. The main focus there was on reporting, with the solution primarily being expected to support the reporting functions already in use. The decentralised structure of the APCOA Group also had a decisive impact. For example, it was necessary to evaluate which options were available to the individual national companies for uploading or directly entering their data.

Decision to use CCH Tagetik

"As a holding company, we were looking for finance software which was as fully independent from specific ERP systems and manufacturers as possible, and one which was as flexible as possible when it came to data supply," explains Muthmann. "We define a format for monthly financial statements and budgets in the simplest possible way, which is then implemented by the individual national subsidiaries from their own ERP systems, such as using a CSV or Excel export."

Functional aspects were the main decision-making factor. The decision to introduce CCH Tagetik was based not least on its large, prestigious reference customers such as Metro AG. In order to allow productivity on the new system as soon as possible, we worked together with the consulting and implementation partners Alper & Schetter and pmOne to create an upload option over a defined CSV interface in the first step. Since then, options for data entry and data validation have been significantly expanded and are used in different ways by the individual companies. While particularly small national companies enter some of the data manually, other national companies use upload functions or driver-based approaches for their planning.

CCH Tagetik is used in the APCOA Group for monthly consolidation, annual financial statements and for planning all budget periods. This begins with the forecast, which runs until the end of the current year. The budget for the following year is planned on a monthly basis, and the mid-term plan covers the following four years on an annual basis. All periods in the budget process at APCOA are consolidated using CCH Tagetik. In head office, cost centre managers also plan their cost centres (multi-storey car parks) in the system.

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Very high degree of independence

"One of the main advantages of using CCH Tagetik is that we as users can make many adjustments ourselves, quickly and easily – and without having to contact the provider or our implementation partners every time. This high degree of independence is partly due to the Microsoft base, for which we already possess a great deal of internal know-how. This puts us in a position to integrate adaptations and new functions for ourselves. **Performance has also risen sharply.** While business intelligence processes often used to take half the night, we can now rebuild the data every hour. This only takes a few minutes, a quarter of an hour at most, without our having noticed any negative effects on system performance," says Muthmann.

Thanks to the possibility of making their own adjustments to the solution 'under the hood', the parking management specialist was able to – for example – **implement a strong interactivity between CCH Tagetik and the MDM.** This also includes a web service which national subsidiaries can use to maintain their own cost centres. Up to 70 different attributes can be managed in the MDM interface, such as for contract durations or the number of storage areas. This means significantly less expenditure of effort, and eliminates the need for manual data management in CCH Tagetik.

A further expansion of the CCH Tagetik platform is already planned for the future. This includes, for example, implementing IFRS 16 accounting standards and the roll-out of driver-based planning, which is currently used in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The possible introduction of CCH Tagetik Collaborative Office is also on the horizon, this being a solution which can significantly simplify reporting and disclosure processes by intelligently linking the report texts to the appropriate figures.

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