

# Microsoft Exchange Server 2003 Implementation Within Chimopar S.A.

## About the Organization

Since 1991 the company became a business where the state holds the majority stake and since 1999 it became a private joint stock company. The wide range of products, the manufacturing experience and the production executed according to the quality insurance system, certified by TÜV MANAGEMENT SERVICE GmbH München provide the company with an extended mobility in promoting new, competitive products on the internal and external market.

In Chimopar's case, the chemical plant from the Bucharest outskirts, with a history exceeding 110 years, the IT system 'migrated' from almost nothing when the company was transferred to private stockholders, to the most high-end business and communication management solutions. A few arguments are required to motivate this evolution:

*'It was 2004, a year when people already successfully and widely used modern means and communications. In this context we could not afford to leave a soft spot in our business regarding informational infrastructure. In order to survive and think about the future success, we needed continuous, safe and fast communication', said Sergiu Barcaru, IT Manager within Chimopar.*

## Initial Status

From status reports written with the pencil on paper, to IT production management. From phone calls made through telephone exchanges and well trained couriers, to electronic messaging.

From walking floppy disks and printed messages around the offices after receiving them from the computer with a dial-up connection through a telephone line installed modem, to a network based on fiber optics and wireless connections. A direct leap into the third millennium, with a short temporal stop-over in the twentieth century, might not seem so easy. But, such a leap has an advantage, namely the fact that is faster and more efficient than the construction on a smooth, nearly barren field, without having to consider what to keep from the old resistance structure.

After the privatization in 1999, the company limited the used surface from the existent one, but the distances between the various buildings and work sites were still considerable, at

least hundreds of meters and the data volume to manage in this company was very large, since the manufacturing range - organic, inorganic substances, proxides, reactives - to which entries of various raw materials are added, exceeds 2,500 products.

*'In came here in the summer of 2003', remembers Sergiu Barcaru. 'There were about 40-50 PCs, bought in the '90s, for 600 employees. There were even some 486s left. Since the endowment took place in time, the computer software was extremely varied: we also had an open source, and also Microsoft systems, ranging from MS-DOS 5.0, up to Windows '98. Each department has its own specific programme for management and production follow-up.'*

As for the communication methods between departments, things were not too complicated: the various messages and documents were either printed on paper or carried around on a floppy disk. The personnel had to walk kilometers on a daily basis.

5 dial-up accounts were available for Internet access, with modems distributed to employees considered to expressly need Internet access. There were big problems: the dial-up connection was interrupted most of the times and large e-mails caused the system to block. Initially, there was a single 'office' address for electronic mail.

*Sergiu Barcaru said: 'Each message was taken from the computer where the address was set and transferred on paper or floppy disk to a person who distributed it further in the plant'.*

Nevertheless, the IT system's need of evolution was first of all identified due to another reasons, namely the large diversity of products and services from the manufacturing processes and the wide range of technological processes. An ERP solution was required to manage the large information volume. Initially, when I came here I was told that we needed to install an integrated management application! To be able to do this we needed to rethink the entire infrastructure, stated Sergiu Barcaru. Then, an efficient information exchange is required to be able to properly draw such a system and this implies a modern communication system.

### **Solution**

Today, Chimopar has a modern and efficient IT infrastructure available to approximately 300 employees.

Calin Gheorghe, Executive Sales Manager within Q'NET, the Microsoft partner that implemented the IT solutions, with the aid of the Chimopar team, said: *'To unify the communications within the company, the client chose the solution based on Exchange Server 2003, after we performed together comparative analyses of the other solutions on the market and subsequently to the implementation of the Active Directory service and of a ISA Server based solution.'*

The solution implemented by Chimopar allows the Exchange 'publication' through the web portal and the employees and managers can access their e-mails wherever they are, using the Outlook Web Access service.

Sergiu Barcaru relates in his turn: *'When I came on board of this company in 2003, we discusses and established what we want and what type of technology complies with our business demands; first of all, we needed the information security, a facile communication and management ability, an infrastructure for the ERO solution operation.'*

*Microsoft solutions based on ISA Server, Exchange Server, SQL Server and Active Directory prove to be exactly what we expected and the ability to integrate these products represented one more factor in favour of our decision. The security policies we wanted were also included in the abilities of these products. Afterwards, be began the collaboration with Q'NET. The infrastructure was functional by the middle of 2004...'*

In 2005, phase two involved the implementation of the Live Communications Server and also, the use of remote electronic messaging services from any computer or terminal connected to the Internet, through Outlook Web Access. Of course, this is a much more efficient system than the one before, in which phone calls and trips to the location of interest were actually the basis.

Calin Gheorghe notes: *'Anywhere you are, if you have Internet connection, you can access an address - just like surfing a website - and a log on page is available, with user name and password, with an e-mail interface and you can read all the e-mails, just like at the office. This is a use experience similar to the one in Outlook'.*

### **Obtained Benefits**

Using the fast message service implemented by Chimopar through the Exchange Server, the company's employees have the advantage of a facile and fast communication. This is an extremely useful service considering the big distances between various work sites. The

communication using this fast messaging system replaces the ordinary phone conversations to a large extent, as well as the use of courier services for sending printed information.

Today, approximately 5,000 e-mails are sent and received annually from the company's computers, inside and outside. An actual estimation of the benefits would involve the quantification of the kilometers which are no longer traveled by the couriers, of the time gained and money saved by reducing phone calls.

*'I can state that the benefits are obvious!' said Sergiu Barcaru. 'Before this IT&C modernization, we had approximately 30-50 messages a day on our sole e-mail address, among which many were spam and viruses.' Of course now the number of phone calls and facsimiles towards the outside decreased to a large extent due to the e-mail.'*

### **Approximately 20 thousand phone calls saved each year**

An estimative calculation determines that from 5-6 thousand useful messages sent and received annually, now the company receives approximately eight times more. This means that at least 15-20 thousand telephone calls and facsimiles sent annually were replaced. And this is a substantial economy for the company.

### **The collaboration inside the company increased tremendously!**

Beyond such calculations, which can be quantified as actual financial gains, the new system also brought other clear benefits to the company!

*Sergiu Barcaru said: 'Basically, the information traffic became more fluid through Exchange Server 2003, using the e-mail and chat system. We often had difficulties when communicating with the exterior: many times the messages arriving on facsimile were not legible and we used couriers and mail services - everything moved slower. If I drafted a document on my computer, I used to print it and leave to hand it to the person who needed it, 600 m away, but now, I can directly print it on the printer located next to that colleague, who now just stretches to pick up the paper. A more experienced user can use more functions of this solution. For example, I can talk to a colleague about a common document and, at a certain point I want to show him something in that document. Instead of sending me the document, instead of me opening and looking at it separately from my colleague, he can now open the document into his computer and share the window with me. In this manner, we can both discuss the same graphic representation.'*

The collaboration system implemented through Exchange Server 2003 changed the work procedures within Chimopar, changed the information flow, improved the entire process and also has an advantage that can not be neglected: today even automatically generated reports can and

are even sent to the users, using Microsoft Reporting Services, a service provided by SQL Server 2005.

### **Sales Agents in the Field are... Inside**

Before using this system, the mere transmission of an order from a beneficiary to the manufacturing location was a difficult job. That is, it was much more complicated than it is now. But that's not all: today, eight sales agents armed with laptops, visit the customers in different country regions and send orders - they remotely communicate with the plant. *'Just like in this case. The entire infrastructure is available to them through VPN connections from 3G cards: e-mails, messaging, file-server. Offers, documentation, specifications, are available anytime,'* said Sergiu Barcaru.

### **There's no such thing as 'it's impossible'!**

*'Anytime I was asked something, I knew I can do it and I could even do it in the best conditions. We have an integrated solution, based on a Microsoft technology, which allows us to rapidly develop any services, especially since we possess a flexible licensing system,'* stated Sergiu Barcaru.