

VIEGA

Leading process piping technology firm chooses Opcenter to significantly improve data quality processes and transparency <

Attendorn, Germany

Siemens Digital Industries Software solutions help Viega keep pace with rapidly growing requirements for maintaining product inventory

CHALLENGES

- Maintain accessibility to more than 17,000 in-stock products
- Introduce CAQ software to automate quality data acquisition processes
- Align corporate processes with industry-standard certifications

KEYS TO SUCCESS

- quality and production management opportunities with the ability to further automate processes
- Reduce costs and time-consuming manual processes
- Enable firm to shift incoming goods employees to area of greatest need

RESULTS

- Integrated Opcenter with existing IT strategy, enabling firm to meet company goals and demand for high-quality products
- Achieved transparency and created new growth opportunities
- Maintained always-accessible inventories by enhancing system competencies

Viega

Viega specializes in installation technology. In addition to pipe systems, the company produces pre-wall and drainage technology. The range includes 17,000 products suitable for almost all applications for building systems technology as well as the utility supply sector or industrial plant and shipbuilding. Founded in 1899 in Attendorn, Germany, the family company has become an international group with over 4,000 employees. Today, Viega exports to more than 75 countries worldwide.

<http://www.viega.com> (<http://www.viega.com>)



By integrating the Opcenter Quality management system with its existing IT strategy, Viega was able to meet its demands for high-quality products.

[Have Questions?](#) Ralph Schneider,
Viega GmbH & Co. KG

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Maintaining in-stock products

Since its founding in 1899, Viega has grown into a global consortium with over 4,000 employees, evolving into one of the leading manufacturers of installation technology for industrial, commercial, and residential projects. The company's range of 17,000 products includes piping systems as well as pre-wall and drainage technology. This always-available inventory illustrates not only the exemplary accessibility of products but also far-reaching system competence.

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Company growth necessitates automation

As the company continued to grow, Viega management realized it needed to automate quality data acquisition processes and replace its Excel® spreadsheet software. This type of data acquisition was not only costly and time-consuming, but it was not a viable way to make the resulting documents available for universal use or evaluation. The future of the company and its certification, in accordance with the German Institute for Standardization (DIN) and the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) 9001, also necessitated overhauling corporate processes and introducing computer-aided quality (CAQ) software.

Viega wanted the new CAQ system to support inspection planning, gage management, incoming goods control, and production inspections, as well as internal and external concerns and complaints.

Additionally, Viega was using self-programmed host solutions for production planning and control (PPC) and operational data acquisition (ODA). It was also important that the master data contained in these systems could be easily transferred to the new CAQ system and inspection orders automatically generated via ODA.

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Selecting a flexible CAQ solution

In 1994 Viega initiated a comparison study with several CAQ solution providers that focused on functionality as well as the potential economic impact of implementing a new system. The company selected Opcenter Quality management software from product lifecycle management (PLM) specialist Siemens Digital Industries Software. Using Opcenter satisfied all identified functional requirements and provided the flexibility of streamlined integration with Viega's existing system environment.

Viega initiated its CAQ implementation, and is now in production with the following Opcenter Quality applications:


- **Automating incoming goods inspections**
The acquisition of incoming goods, such as raw materials and products, is managed by Viega with its SAP® enterprise resource planning (ERP) system interfaced with Incoming/Outgoing Goods Control (IGC/ OGC). This connection allows the system to automatically generate a corresponding inspection order, and the resulting inspection dictates the release of materials. Using IGC/OGC enables Viega to capture inspection data and automatically make decisions on how goods are directed to respective parts of the production and logistics processes. Following a successful incoming goods inspection, a detailed, characteristic-specific supplier assessment can be generated.
- **Optimizing production processes**
Statistical Process Control (SPC) is used to document various inspections carried out within the scope of the production process. Each individual part undergoes a fully automated visual inspection and is checked for tightness. A range of other characteristics is subjected to random sampling. Measuring machines are used to automatically collect and transfer results to the CAQ system, where data is assigned to a corresponding batch, enabling retrospective traceability. Viega uses Gage Management to regularly calibrate and administer its measuring machines and gages.
- **Streamlining complaints and managing evaluations**
If defective parts are discovered during production inspection or the incoming goods control process, Concern and Complaint Management (CCM) enables Viega to automatically initiate a handling complaint and evaluate the resulting data.
To manage the detailed, comprehensive evaluations of data generated during SPC or IGC/OGC processes, Viega uses Evaluation (EVA).
- **Managing deadlines and responsibilities**
Quality Action Management (QAM) helps Viega define and monitor characteristics and associated deadlines and responsibilities for each Opcenter module. Using QAM also enables the user to visualize all characteristics on both a user-specific and cross-departmental basis. In cases when deadlines are exceeded, configurable escalation mechanisms help Viega define appropriate handling procedures to confirm the central administration and management of all characteristics.
- **Maintaining quality control**
Using Quality Main Control (QMC) provides Viega with a real-time overview of the latest results from incoming goods inspections and in-process production tests that are initiated in their respective departments.
- **Enhancing system efficiencies**
Viega uses NetCom to connect the CAQ system with the SAP enterprise resource planning solution and its ODA solution. Commercial master data is transferred from SAP to Opcenter, and an incoming goods entry in SAP automatically generates an incoming goods order in Opcenter Quality. Following the inspection, the system generates a usage decision that is routed back to SAP. External complaint data is automatically sent to the SAP Business Warehouse for evaluation. This information is also accessible to Viega's SAP users without requiring access to the quality management solution.

Have Questions?

Operational data contained in the ODA module for SPC inspection order generation, complaint input, and batch evaluation are also transmitted for further processing in CCM.

ToolCom provides Viega with an online interface with gages located along the production lines, enabling the automatic transfer of SPC measurement data, such as plastic piping records, to the CAQ system for further processing. Compliance with limit values is determined within the scope of a manual check using EVA. Integrating disparate systems not only avoids duplicate entries but leads to increased efficiency and reduced errors.

"The seamless integration and intuitive user interface of our CAQ solution assures a high degree of acceptance for Opcenter Quality at Viega," says Ralph Schneider, quality manager at Viega.

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Benefits

By using Opcenter Quality, Viega was able to replace the manual administration of quality management data flows. Automation of the processes offers a wide range of new quality and production management opportunities with the ability to further automate processes.


Dynamic sampling in the incoming goods inspection saves on capacities, and the practical individual weighting of inspections also increases efficiency. As a result, Viega saves time in the incoming goods process, enabling the company to shift incoming-goods employees to other areas of the fast-growing company.

The integrated data acquisition and common database allow Viega to realize process transparency and create new opportunities while increasing efficiency and process optimization.

Batch-specific data allocation enables traceability, which makes it possible to determine which product was produced by which employee, on which machine, at what time and under what conditions.


With the implementation of Opcenter Quality, Viega was able to replace classic running inspections in the production process with a worker's self-assessment.

"By integrating the Opcenter Quality management system with its existing IT strategy, Viega was able to meet its demands for high-quality products," says Schneider.

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Looking ahead

With Viega's continuing growth and development, the company has simultaneously enhanced and grown its CAQ system, periodically implementing new functionality into the process. Viega plans to further adapt its CAQ environment to keep pace with its expanding requirements.

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