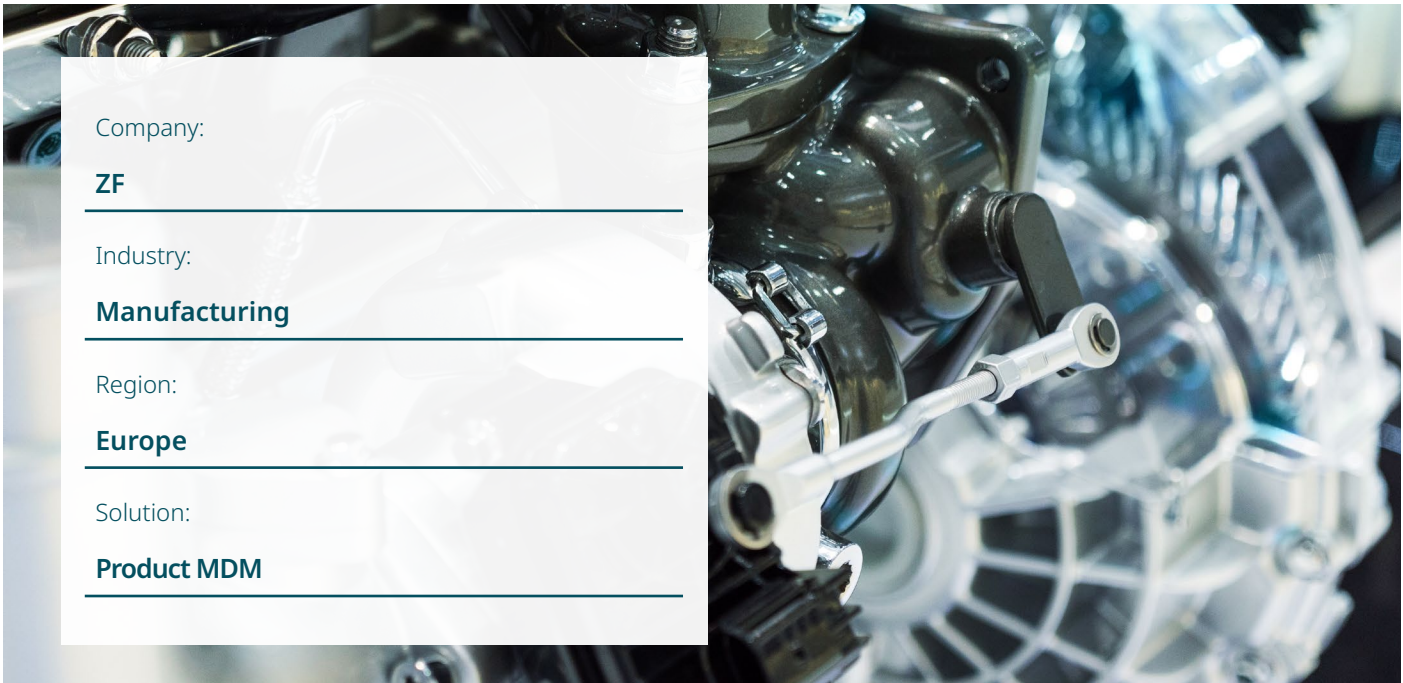


■ Managing Millions of Auto Parts in a Cost-Effective Way from Ideation to Sale



Company:

ZF

Industry:

Manufacturing

Region:

Europe

Solution:

Product MDM

Executive Summary

ZF Friedrichshafen is one of the world's leading suppliers of driveline and chassis technology. It makes gearboxes, steering systems, axles, chassis components and complete systems for use in cars, trucks, buses, construction and agricultural machinery, wind turbines, and ships. The company's ZF Services division manages its parts-retail business under five established brands: Sachs, Lemförder, Boge, ZF Lenksysteme, and ZF Parts.

As an aftermarket specialist, ZF Services continuously invests in new technology and service excellence to build on its long-term market position. One key component of its leadership is efficient central product data management to develop and market spare parts globally.

The company chose Stibo Systems Product Master Data Management (MDM) solution to replace 15 databases and manage the worldwide product data flow. The solution reduces complexity and minimizes network load.

Product MDM is today their central data management where initial product ideas come to life.

The Business Payoff

Product MDM offers a secure basis for the efficient centralized design, management and distribution of very large quantities of data, helping facilitate a quicker time-to-market.

Testing shows that the network copes easily with large amounts of data because Product MDM sends only the data that is actually needed. Expanding the system to include five million items is both technically feasible and cost effective.

The Customer Experience

The MDM system initially had only five key users, but following training, around 40 ZF Services employees are now managing the data and there will eventually be around 100. The company plans to manage all 32 of its subsidiaries and product groups using MDM, which will then handle some five million items centrally.



Challenge

With around 180 new car models coming onto the market each year, there is a huge requirement for parts, and it is continuing to grow. As a leading supplier, ZF Services seeks to ensure that its products cover 95% of the available car models, whilst also offering value for money.

This requires a highly efficient time-to-market strategy, to design and sell parts as soon as possible after each new model is launched, which means that the design and marketing information-flow must also be extremely efficient. It must also avoid errors caused by system discontinuities and duplicated product data.

ZF Services decided to centralize the global processes it uses to manage product databases. One challenge was the extremely complex nature of the information, since the data process must accurately show different product groups with different design sequences.

The global information-flow needs to be simple and the IT infrastructure must be scalable in order to accommodate future expansion in the volume of data and changes in the way it is used.

Solution

MDM manages all product, design and vehicle information, product relationships and specifications.

It also handles market and dimensional data for the company's two main product sectors, cars and trucks, comprising almost one million items.

The first step in a new product design project is for the product managers to enter the item into Product MDM centrally, to prevent duplication of the development process.

The data is maintained and expanded until the product reaches maturity.

Data maintenance using Product MDM continues throughout the product's entire lifecycle until it is finally removed from stock. The MDM system also supplies data to other platforms, such as SAP.

Results

ZF Services chose the master data management (MDM) solution from Stibo Systems to manage its worldwide product information centrally. In the space of 18 months, this replaced 15 individual databases.

Trends such as hybrid and electric engines will bring a significant increase in the number of new vehicle models. ZF Services believes it is well prepared to continue managing its product data effectively in the future.

“ Stibo Systems MDM is the perfect solution for us because it takes account of our specific needs and lets us individually manage a very wide range of product groups. It's also programmed to handle very large quantities of data, so it forms the ideal basis for our growth plans. Based on our experience so far, we would definitely choose Stibo Systems again.”

— Dieter Stich, Head of Product Management Services, ZF



About Stibo Systems

Stibo Systems, the master data management company, is the trusted enabler of data transparency. Our solutions are the driving force behind forward-thinking companies around the world that have unlocked the strategic value of their master data. We empower them to improve the customer experience, drive innovation and growth and create an essential foundation for digital transformation. This gives them the transparency they require and desire – a single, accurate view of their master data – so they can make informed decisions and achieve goals of scale, scope and ambition. Stibo Systems is a privately held subsidiary of the Stibo A/S group, founded in 1794, and is headquartered in Aarhus, Denmark. More at stibosystems.com.