

## Success Story

# Machinery pool – a data gold mine

**Safety and innovation are among Geobrugg AG of Romanshorn's core values. It therefore comes as no surprise that the company relies on a cloud system landscape to analyse its machine data.**



**GEOBRUGG®**  
**BRUGG**

Safety is our nature

Geobrugg AG develops and manufactures protection solutions against rockfalls, mudslides, landslides and much more. As the machinery to produce these solutions does not exist in this form, the company has developed its entire international machinery itself over the years. 'Hands on' – that is the company mentality. This has also been evident in the current 'Global Production Performance Cockpit' project. Within five months, Geobrugg implemented a system landscape in conjunction with Swisscom that integrates all machinery in the cloud and enables attractive data visualisations. Today, the company benefits from near real-time data around the clock. This facilitates decision making, reduces costs and improves the quality of reporting and efficiency.

**Initial situation**

Geobrugg AG of Romanshorn (Canton of Thurgau) develops and manufactures protection solutions against natural hazards such as rockfalls, landslides and avalanches. It also provides safety measures against accelerated objects of all kinds in mining and tunnel construction, as well as on motor sport tracks and in industry. The company, which belongs to the BRUGG Group, employs more than 350 specialists worldwide, and production takes place at seven locations on all continents.

**Digital corporate culture**

As a global manufacturing company, at Geobrugg there is a strong focus on internal processes, as Mischa Hollenstein, Digital Transformation Director, explains: ‘As long ago as the noughties, we introduced a lean management strategy to reduce waste to a minimum in all areas.’ With this tactical move, the company created the right basis for taking later steps towards digitisation. The seeds sown in earlier days are now bearing fruit in the form of lean processes at all levels. All Geobrugg employees around the world thus take the initiative whenever they see potential for optimisation. This is the case with the joint project with Swisscom, which was the result of a bottom-up initiative.



Geobrugg AG operates on all continents.

**Objective**

In future, all of Geobrugg machinery’s performance data will be documented and evaluated in a single, central repository. Before the transition in production, Excel was used as a reporting tool, as Jürg Atz, Head of Production at Geobrugg, recalls: ‘We kept 53 Excel files with a total of 600 registers. You can imagine how time consuming and error prone it was to maintain them manually. At the end of the year, we had to recreate the links, which took about two-and-a-half weeks of work.’

**Data veracity**

For an innovation-driven company, this was no longer in keeping with the times. ‘It was important for us to be able to store the data of all our production sites centrally in order to create transparency and a clean basis for evaluations,’ says Jürg Atz. ‘It almost goes without saying that a manufacturing company must have state-of-the-art processes. It’s much more crucial that we know what we want to do with the data we collect.’ For Mischa Hollenstein, what is essential here is the learning factor: ‘With continuous data storage, we can determine why the output of a machine in Romanshorn is higher than that of the exact same machine in Chile and react accordingly.’ An interactive dashboard should be the

solution – one that documents the current condition of the plants, collects the data of all machinery worldwide and processes it in a user-friendly way.



**Hands-on mentality**

The digitisation project was the result of a bottom-up initiative.



↑ At its headquarters in Romanshorn (Canton of Thurgau), Gebrugg produces solutions ...

← ... that provide protection against rockfalls and the like all over the world.

## Solution

The technology company headquartered in Romanshorn has been pursuing a group-wide Microsoft strategy for some time now. 'Thanks to our ERP system from Microsoft, our entire logistics and production have been paperless since 2019,' says Mischa Hollenstein. From a variety of solutions, including the Microsoft Azure Cloud, a fully comprehensive data cockpit of virtual and physical parts has emerged. All machinery hardware and software were updated in advance. Finally, interfaces to the company network were established. A virtual cloud was created that receives machine data from all over the world. There is also an app with input forms for recording data from offline machines for standardised reporting and for enriching existing data. All this was implemented in just five months.

### Cloud partner for manufacturing

On the one hand, Gebrugg's earlier clean data management was decisive for the successful implementation. On the other, this was also thanks to the expert support of Gebrugg's implementation partner, Swisscom. Jürg Atz jokes: 'The two specialists from Swisscom became so involved with our products and production processes that they could probably take over my position today.' Swisscom was mainly responsible for designing the data platform, the automated preparation and providing the data and user-friendly dashboards.

**'It's crucial that we know what we want to do with the data we collect.'**

**Jürg Atz**  
Head of Production, Gebrugg AG

**Benefits**

Global Production Performance Cockpit – this is the name of the new data cockpit for Gebrugg’s production operations. All locations worldwide should be connected to the system by the end of 2023. Back at headquarters in Romanshorn, Jürg Atz was already enthusiastic about the new cockpit shortly after the go-live in 2022 – and can precisely quantify its success: ‘In some cases, we have been able to increase our efficiency by up to 15 percent. The time-consuming manual Excel maintenance of the past is now done with just a few clicks, and data is also updated in real time. This highly automated and centralised data reconciliation procedure now provides us with information and creates transparency that allows us to manage our manufacturing much more effectively.’

**Optimised maintenance**

For maintenance, rapid data availability is a decisive advantage. Unplanned machine downtimes are detected within seconds and causes are determined in just a few clicks. Problems are solved faster, and output is increased. The company’s sales have risen along with the learning curve – as Jürg Atz observes. ‘Analysing the data gives us much greater control over our manufacturing costs and enables us to see how each machine is performing 24/7.’

**Swiss standards across locations**

Gebrugg’s management benefits from attractively prepared key figure analyses and, with each international roll-out, from an improved basis for invest-

ment and decision making. Mischa Hollenstein appreciates the versatility of data analysis: ‘The dashboard can be configured for different user groups, such as hierarchy levels or product lines, which accelerates trend developments. This project is definitely a driver for further steps in our digital transformation,’ says Mischa Hollenstein, looking to the future.



Safety first: this applies to Gebrugg’s product standards just as much as it does to assembly.

**About Gebrugg AG**

- Industry: Manufacturing
- Employees: 370
- Users: 10



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