

abas Distribution  
abas eB



## Media service provider HOFA relies on abas business software

User report HOFA GmbH

H O F A  
MEDIA | STUDIOS | TRAINING

### Industry

Media and music production

### Country

Germany

### Project Overview

- Ensure high quality services
- Increase transparency
- Decrease error rate
- Reduce paperwork
- User-friendly implementation, customizations, and upgrades



## Far more than “just” a shop

**Restructured in 2005, HOFA GmbH now unifies the division HOFA-Media, HOFA-Studios, and HOFA-Training under the HOFA umbrella brand as a fulfillment service provider and production company. Given that the ERP solution they used up until 2005 could no longer keep up with their rapid growth and that urgently needed e-business functionality could only be implemented at a very high cost, HOFA started looking for a new ERP and e-business solution.**

The system needed to be easy to operate and should in particular be flexible and adaptable to continuously changing business needs. HOFA wanted to use a number of web applications to expand their high-quality services, which should interact optimally with the new ERP system. So-called “soft” factors such as upgrade capability and safeguarded continued development of the system standards also played an important role in selecting the software. With abas business software – an integrated ERP and e-business solution – they found exactly what they were looking for. Since going live with the system, transparency across the company has increased, data capture and support times have been reduced by up to 50%, productivity in order entry has improved significantly; meanwhile the error rate has dropped down to 0.

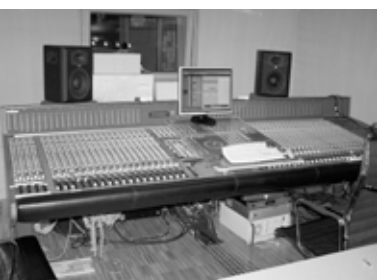
*"To this day, we have processed about 3,000 productions with abas eB. Personnel costs decreased by 20%. Data maintenance and data entry times decreased by 50% and error reduction has dropped to a zero ratio." A perfect scenario is when an entirely completed sales order is passed from abas eB to abas ERP."*

Jochen Groer  
IT specialist  
HOFA GmbH

Casually speaking, this could very well describe the HOFA business field. Founded in 1988, HOFA is now one of the leading providers in the media and music production industry. Its customer base boasts include big names from the industry and service sector, composers, producers and bands. The company is divided into three self-sufficient business units. HOFA-Studios create products such as sound logos, audiobooks or musical trailers for film, advertising or product presentations. HOFA-Training with its distance learning institute for home recording offers a 12-month training program for various aspects, such as recording, mixing or acoustics. HOFA-Media in turn deals with CD & DVD production, design and artwork.

### **"More efficiency and flexibility"**

This is how Frank Simml, HOFA GmbH CEO and co-founder, phrases the company's requirements prior to the implementation of the new ERP and eBusiness solution. In 1998, HOFA introduced its first materials management system which at that time was supplied by a Scandinavian provider.



Simml remembers, "We were never really able to use our old system. Many problems already occurred during the go-live. The old solution was very inflexible and we had to buy the adjustments for a lot of money from our provider's system house. For us, as a pure service provider in a very competitive market which demands a maximum of flexibility this situation posed a real problem." As a consequence HOFA went into the market to look for a replacement in 2003. Due to the experiences with the old system, this selection process was carried out very diligently. "We informed ourselves on the internet about different systems and defined three providers which we then invited to our Headquarters to present their respective systems. We also visited trade fairs and forums for prospective customers and had them specify reference customers for us," recalls Simml. He adds, "We wanted a flexible, upgradable and integrated ERP and eBusiness system, which we could adjust ourselves, as well as a stable and reliable provider who could offer us a security on our investment." abas Business Software fulfills these requirements and was implemented in 2005.

## Project agreement provides security during software implementation

HOFA followed the implementation method developed by the abas partner ABAS Projektierung, which implements the software efficiently and close to the standard. A project agreement ensures security for all parties involved. The implementation of an ERP system has top priority – the management is the topmost instance in implementing a project. Simml, "Metaphorically speaking, an ERP migration is like a heart transplant: the heart of a company is replaced by a new one. Therefore, an ERP implementation always should be carried out seriously." Project managers and key users also play an important role. On the one hand, the project has to be combined with the company environment and, on the other hand, it must be organized internally and carried out successfully. A project agreement specifies individual team members' tasks. Every person involved in the implementation has already been familiarized with the new ERP software and therefore knows about the possibilities of abas ERP. Advantages are that the implementing partner ABAS Projektierung as well as future users at HOFA are on the same page.

## Zero errors with less effort

Jochen Groer, IT specialist at HOFA GmbH, has been significantly involved in designing and further developing the applications developed with abas eB. He explains, "The abas ERP go-live in October of 2005 went smoothly. In June 2006 we then started to realize the eB components and went live with it in October 2006, only one year after having put the ERP system into operation. Until then, since there was no interface to the old system, we had been using an old web system together with abas ERP. Prior to the abas Business Software implementation, data had to be maintained two or even three times. There was no transparency and many errors occurred when transferring data from one system to the other. A very time-consuming task.



*„We can carry out adjustments of abas ERP ourselves. Thanks to flexible abas Business Software system there is no limit to our creativity.“*

*Jochen Groer  
IT specialist  
HOFA GmbH*

To this day, we have processed about 3,000 productions with abas eB. In the sales order creation and support areas, personnel costs decreased by 20%. Data maintenance and data entry times can not be truly measured, but in terms of figures they have decreased by 50%. Error reduction has also decreased, the ratio has dropped to zero." CEO Simml is also happy, "Only one year after the introduction we have regained the costs spent on abas ERP and abas eB implementation." Groer sees further significant benefits in the close connection of abas ERP and eBusiness, "Already completed sales orders arrive in the abas ERP screen, the customer is created automatically and creation times have been completely transferred from Hofa employees to customers. Support times have been cut in half. A perfect scenario is when an entirely completed sales order is passed from abas eB to abas ERP."

## Employees are thinking ABAS

"We can carry out adjustments of our business software ourselves," says Groer. He adds, "Thanks to our flexible system there is no limit to our creativity. We participated in a training course at our system house and have been adjusting the software independently ever since." Groer smiles and gets going, "In the time it takes to tell an external source what I want, the adjustment already has been made. A very good example for this is a coupon which we created for a marketing campaign in our Webshop. After only 5 hours it had been created in the eBusiness shop as well as ERP system. Simple, ready-made shop systems are unable to deal with this sort of thing."

Simml adds, "Today, many employees already think in „abas" and actively demand adjustments. Acceptance is large. The great thing about our eBusiness system is that a full ERP system works in the background." He continues, "Despite the highly adjusted system we were able to import the last upgrade ourselves in only a few hours."

### One eBusiness, two applications

Using the slogan „Fairplay - buy music from the artist" HOFA provides its customers with the possibility to present and sell music via an Internet portal. In the way of eBay and Amazon, customers can place their productions directly in the Fairplay shop. Then, they only have to be approved by a HOFA employee. Other customers then can buy, review and evaluate these products. HOFA sees itself as a full service provider for digital and analog media. Hofa Media Shop is much more than „just" a conventional shop. Here, shop users can compose an individually produced data medium 24/7, using a product calculator. With this, a shop visitor can configure the selection of the data medium format, design of the packaging, handle services such as GEMA registration or promotion with radio stations according to individual needs. This process is entirely carried out in our ERP system behind the shop. "The ingenious thing about abas eB is that it is an integrated solution," says Groer and adds, "the Hofa Web performance and ERP system are connected. This way it is possible that internal staff-reference is also able to operate the product calculator when talking to a prospective customer, the same way the prospective customer can on the Web."

#### Project support:

ABAS Projektierung GmbH



*„Only one year after the implementation, we have regained the costs spent on abas ERP and abas eB."*

*Frank Simml  
CEO and Co-founder  
HOFA GmbH*

### Product profile - abas Business Software

The brand name abas Business Software includes the products abas ERP for production, abas Distribution for distribution, wholesale, and service companies, and the eBusiness solution abas eB. abas ERP is an ERP application designed specifically for manufacturers in the Assemble-to-Order, Make-to-Order and Engineer-to-Order environment. abas Business Software is priced to fit most budgets while delivering full ERP functionality. It is flexible, adaptable, internationally applicable and a save investment for the future. The clear structure and well thought-out implementation strategy of the system enable a short implementation period as well as trouble-free integration into the company structure. New functions and technologies are constantly added to the standard software with each new upgrade. As a result, abas users are always using the most up-to-date product. abas Business Software is currently offered in 28 languages and can be run using Linux, Unix and Windows. ABAS has been a supporter of the open source operating system Linux since 1995. Approximately 80% of over 2,200 abas installations are based in Linux.

abas Business Software - range of services: Sales/sales order processing/shipping, purchasing/purchase order processing, warehouse management, scheduling, logistics, materials management/MRP, production/PPC, financial accounting, fixed asset accounting, cost accounting, controlling, eBusiness, portal, etc.

**Company profile**

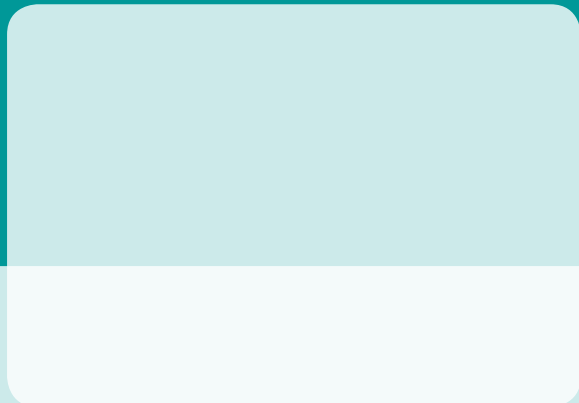
ABAS Software AG is a leading provider of cost-effective ERP solutions for midsize manufacturers and distributors. More than 2,200 customers have chosen ABAS as their IT specialist and work successfully with the internationally applicable abas Business Software. ABAS, established in 1980 and once characterized by students, has now become a global network of companies. ABAS Software AG in Karlsruhe employs more than 115 people, and together with over 50 abas partners ABAS employs approx. 600 employees worldwide. The abas software partners provide a wide range of services including implementation, customization, hardware and network support. ABAS also provides on-site support and ensures short reaction times and high service quality. International partners in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Spain, Iran, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Hong Kong, Australia, Mexico, and the USA represent the ABAS Software AG throughout the world. The partner network is continuously being expanded.

**About HOFA GmbH**

Founded in 1988, HOFA GmbH is one of the leading providers in the media and music production industry. The umbrella brand HOFA presents itself with its business units HOFA-Media, HOFA-Studios and HOFA-Training as a fulfillment service provider and production company. National and international HOFA customers comprise renowned industrial companies and service providers as well as renowned composers, producers and bands in the audio production area. In the duplication area, CDs or DVDs are pressed in any number of copies, HOFA ensures the right outward appearance and delivers fast and on schedule. Due to its capacities HOFA is able to produce and deliver products in very little time. Since there is never too much service, HOFA-Media sees itself as a partner, from the conceptual design, to project planning up to the final product, in the business client field as well as in the consumer area. Being one of the largest studios in Southern Germany HOFA-Studios offers an uncompromising claim to service and sound. At present there are four recording and three master control rooms, a mastering suite, catering, and guest apartment available. The distance learning institute HOFA-Training was founded in 2005. This distance learning course makes it possible to expand one's knowledge in a private studio while working at one's own pace. The courses offered at the distance learning institute teach all those wanting to deal with recording, mixing and mastering and wanting to use the new digital technology options from home, on a high quality level.



Your abas Software Partner:



Software Provider: