



Office furniture leader, Kimball International, Accelerates SAP data management and Delivers Efficiencies and Time to Market

With Kimball's organic growth and acquisitions such as Nash, so has its product mix increased dramatically in recent years. In 2003 when Kimball rolled out SAP they adapted several methods to update SAP data using CATT and Custom Transactions for instance. However, soon the SAP users and more pressingly the data management teams found that the volume and complexity of the updates were slowing down their time to market, it was difficult to get data ready to be used.

While the workload increased some of the most time intensive changes fell on shoulders of a team led by Don Neu, director of IT at Kimball Office. At that same time due to growth in other areas of the company, some of the SAP data team members were moving to other positions, and the data team reduced and the workload remained the constant.



Kimball Office is a US company headquartered in Jasper, Indiana. Kimball Office is a design driven, technologically savvy brand, tailoring solutions that provide better workplace, learning & healing environment for over 50 years

THE CHALLENGE WAS DATA MANAGEMENT

The super users of marketing, material management, supply chain, and data management teams were responsible for managing massive amount of data for SAP business process with tight time constraints to support operations.

Spreadsheets were maintained and initiated by business teams within Kimball to manage simple and complex tasks. For example, Bill of Material, Material Master, pricing, and financials were collected in spreadsheets. Timely delivery was a challenge in this manual process. The process of preparing, formatting, checking, transforming spreadsheets was exasperating and unwelcomed before it was loaded in SAP.

TENS OF THOUSANDS OF UPDATES
in no time at all
TIME TO MARKET HAS IMPROVED
THE BUSINESS

How hard was it? Over 90 per cent of Kimball's products require a reassignment of classes and attributes since Kimball has highly configurable inventory of products. The team used CATT to do those reassignment of classes, a very manual and challenging copy file. Material classification of over 100,000 of models, every model has 1 to 2 dozen characteristics. Electronic catalog for furniture industry required a lot of data propagation using classifications, typically producing one electronic catalog a month.

THE NEW WAY UTILIZING INNOWERA'S PROCESS RUNNER

130,000 UPDATES –
ran in 9 hours overnight
MASTER DATA AUTOMATION
SUCCESS

According to Don Neu, after implementing Process Runner they have benefitted in a number of ways, "If Innowera went away we'd have to really rethink what we're doing and retool our processes."

One critical result is that now Kimball has the ability to review and test data before loading - a unique capability of Process Runner. Kimball users can now debug data

issues before it is loaded to SAP, which saves a lot of time. This software has become a vital part of business as it keeps up with the speed Don and his team need. Previously the team would spend numerous hours fixing and analyzing the data in hopes of getting it right.



“Innowera’s support is great. Turnaround time is also very good, but it’s the thorough solutions offered by your team that stands out”

-Don Neu - Kimball Office

One other tremendous benefit is the ability to use all of the existing spreadsheets from their existing processes. Change management has been no issue at all.

Now, Process Runner can handle any job no matter how big or small making life very convenient. To Kimball’s surprise there were some unexpected benefits that came with using Process Runner. For example, in CLMM transaction, a class would be assigned if it was not there, and churns can also be maintained.

According to the team, they have “no way to make big mistakes” with Process Runner as the built in data validation prevents those bigger mistakes from occurring, often a challenge to overcome.

AGILE DATA, HAPPY USERS

Fast forward to present and operations are uneventful when it comes to managing data. End users look forward to handing over their spreadsheets to the data team and in relatively short time they can see it loaded in SAP with highest quality. A task that used to take hours or days is now completed in minutes.

Process Runner will automatically assign the class if it is not assigned as well as set the value. Extremely large worksheets can be easily generated in 15 to 20 minutes.

“We’ve done tens of thousands of updates in no time at all” according to Don. Being able to seamlessly maintain, churn and move the content of the build assembly to kits, really made a huge impact for their teams. Time to market has improved in the business as a result. This means real dollars to a business like Kimball Office.

Chained **12 PROCESSES**
INTO 1 Automated Process
SAMPLE MATERIAL CLASSIFICATION

For instance, a chain of three separate processes are linked and run automatically in order, providing over 130,000 updates. This “job” runs in 9 hours and scheduled overnight. Kimball’s data team even chained 12 processes into 1 in one instance to perform complete Bill of Material maintenance steps.

“Truly work being done for us overnight while we are resting,” remarked Don Neu. Remote scheduling of these updates is as easy as running my update, while sitting in my chair watching a ball game. Literally!”

LOOKING AHEAD

Kimball would like to add more automation for their users. Innowera’s Process Runner Excel-Add In is just the product Kimball can use to achieve this goal. Don and Senior Product Data Management, Cory Layman, and others are looking at how to automate other areas like pricing coordination and resets, and accounting. Innowera’s financial modules are well received in the SAP industry and Kimball can make a good use of this award winning software.

To learn more about Innowera Products and Solutions, contact
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