PRO.FILE
BY PROCAD

On Track for the Future with PRO.FILE

PRO.FILE keeps processes flowing at Moll Automatisierung

- **PLM processes integrated with CAD and ERP systems**
- **DMS^{tec} with automated document control**
- **Secure data exchange with external engineering offices**
- **Straightforward migration from PSP to PRO.FILE**

When Moll Automatisierung, a German automotive supplier steeped in tradition, was acquired by the ROFA Group in 2010, this also meant a fresh start for all matters PDM and ERP. As a long-standing user of PRO.FILE and Navision, ROFA set the course ahead. Its companies collaborate closely when it comes to their common data foundation and were looking for a product data backbone that would allow them to manage their product data and documents across company lines while keeping their processes flexible.

"PRO.FILE is every bit as good as PSP, but it is also much more modern in its program structures and interface design. This makes it that much more intuitive to use."

Hans-Peter Schmelber,
Head of IT

Successful transition from PSP to PRO.FILE

Moll Automatisierung GmbH had previously relied on Product Stream Professional (PSP) to manage its drawings. The final factor in the decision to quickly deploy PRO.FILE was Autodesk's 2014 announcement that it would discontinue PSP.

The company was particularly interested in the multi-CAD capabilities offered by the system, as it was also looking to restructure its CAD environment by replacing AutoCAD with SolidWorks and Catia. The only thing the company was unsure of was the products it would eventually pick. With PRO.FILE, the company has kept and continues to keep all options open.
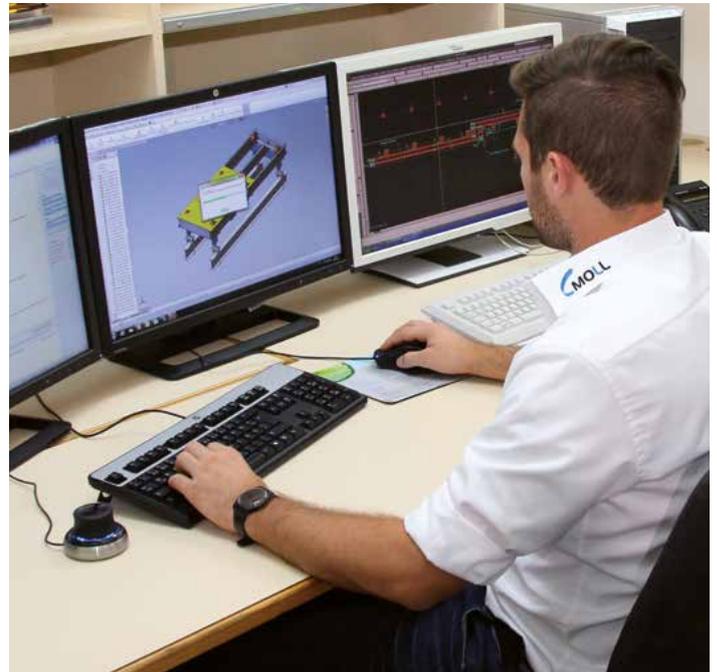
The perfect basis for end-to-end product lifecycle management

Initially, the designers at Moll were reluctant to say goodbye to PSP. And they were not alone as the other departments had also become accustomed to working with the system over all these years. But as Moll had set a strategic course towards achieving end-to-end product lifecycle management, switching to Vault as the successor designated by Autodesk was out of the question. With PRO.FILE, the company opted for a fully-fledged, seamless PLM and PDM solution that also delivers extensive DMS capabilities that can be leveraged across the enterprise and Group. What's more: "After a short grieving period, PRO.FILE has gained full acceptance among our engineers," explains Hans-Peter Schmelber, Head of IT. In its transition from PSP to PRO.FILE Moll did not keep and migrate any legacy data, the new system was started from scratch. Instead, an interface for read-only access to the legacy system was set up for the time being as the company continues to hold on to PSP for its spare parts. If an item has been previously captured in PSP and is now to be created in PRO.FILE, the respective drawing is conveniently transferred.

DMS[tec] takes control of document structures

From the onset of the project, Moll Automatisierung had planned to also make PRO.FILE its DMS for any business and project documents – extending its use beyond design tasks alone.

They knew that with PRO.FILE they would get a powerful system able to navigate the high level of complexity inherent in the docu-
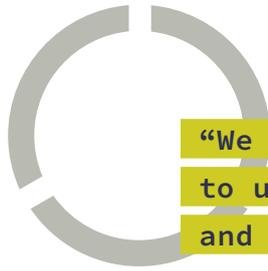

The staff at Moll's headquarters in Bavaria uses modern IT technologies to deliver highest quality automation systems with maximum efficiency.

ment structures of technical companies. This is what experts call DMS[tec]. It describes a document management system tailored to the needs of the project-driven work environments usually found in the technical industries.

The system was set up in exemplary fashion at the company's head quarters in Germany and designed in a way that will also allow other companies in the ROFA group to use it in the future.

PDM embedded in ERP and PPS systems

At Moll Automatisierung, PRO.FILE is embedded in a network of IT systems that is used to control development and manufacturing processes. It is comprised of Microsoft Navision (as the main ERP solution) and the Fepa.Net production planning system (as the shop floor control system). The latter is required because Moll continues to manufacture in-house. Nearly half of the company's 200 employees work in production.

Flexibility made easy

"The fact that PRO.FILE can be conveniently configured on the live system really makes our daily work much easier, " Hans-Peter Schmelber points out. One frequent requirement, for example, is to set up new document types and user groups and the workflows that go along with them. With most other systems, this would involve programming or a call to the support hotline. Having completed an administrator training course, Hans-Peter Schmelber is now able to maintain and expand 90 percent of his PDM/PLM system himself, something that seemed unthinkable before. "Even if those changes and adaptations to PRO.FILE are few and far between they are still completed in no time at all because of its logical design and structure!"

For processes, adaptability to change is key

Right now, Moll focuses on its process design abilities. It has launched a project – fittingly named "Darwin" – with the sole purpose of reviewing, redefining, and improving its existing processes. Hans-Peter Schmelber was very pleased to find out that with PRO.FILE and its PLM complement PRO.CEED he would have just the right technology at his fingertips. Moll is now able to model newly defined business processes from a wide range of business areas using the PRO.FILE and PRO.CEED software.

PRO.FILE and the PLM complement PRO.CEED fully automate business processes such as invoice processing and complaint management.

Conveyor systems for the automotive industry: Moll develops and manufactures solutions for transportation tasks which require flexibility when handling large quantities.

This also includes invoice processing. Currently, the company relies on a conventional, paper-based approach to approve incoming invoices that is defined in Excel and Visio charts. From now on, the PLM solution will fully automate all of this. Complaint management is another of the company's standard processes. Moll is planning to model it in way that allows its employees to work straight from within PRO.FILE using the appropriate document templates. Order entry is yet another area where the company plans to leverage PROCAD's process tool. This will do little to change the work involved, however, it will make it much easier to monitor process progress.

The Customer

The company formerly known as Moll Maschinenbau GmbH emerged from a small engineering company, which was founded in 1918 and has since become one of the leading suppliers for the automotive industry in the area of conveyor technology and automation. In 2011, the company was acquired by the ROFA Group and embarked on a bright new future under the name "Moll Automatisierung GmbH". Today, it is known as a powerhouse in conveyor technology, special machine design, and end of line technology.

Collaboration with external engineering offices

Moll Automatisierung also uses PROCAD's data exchange platform PROOM to control the exchange of documents with third parties and benefits from its seamless integration with PRO.FILE. The tool was introduced alongside PRO.FILE and was deployed as a private cloud on the company's own servers. It covers all aspects of exchanging data with third-parties and also across the Group if required by internal information security policies. PROOM is built on the idea of exchanging sensitive data using virtual project rooms that allow project stakeholders to upload engineering data for collaboration purposes.

The owner of a project room controls who can access the room. Moll's design department uses PROOM to share entire subassemblies with external design and engineering offices. The company used to rely exclusively on FTP for the exchange. "PROOM makes it that much easier to handle," points out Hans-Peter Schmelber. "We have defined a key user for each department who is now able to create PROOM project rooms. Our colleagues can just do everything on their own. This really helps ease the workload on the IT team. It is the perfect way to exchange documents and user acceptance is very high." A total of 160 project rooms have been created so far. Moll sees the availability of electronic confirmations as the key advantage over its previous document exchange approach. Recipients cannot download the files before signing the company's non-disclosure agreement. By now, every one of the company's departments has come to enjoy the benefits of the platform and it is being used by designers, sales reps and buyers alike to share documents with electricians, sub-suppliers, marketing departments, human resources or administration staff.

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