

Hamburg Süd optimizes the costs of intermodal transport and standardizes business processes with a custom, cloud-based solution

Using an agile project set-up, Capgemini successfully implemented for Hamburg Süd, a subsidiary of Mærsk Line, a custom, cloud-based solution for intermodal transport services that optimized costs and standardized business processes

Focusing on process optimization and user experience

Intermodal transport is a key component of Hamburg Süd's portfolio. As part of this service, the shipping company organizes the actual sea shipment of a container as well as the transport services on either side of the journey, which can include options such as road and rail. The shipping company's customers can therefore book door-to-door transport through a single provider.

As part of the introduction of optimized standard processes and the modernization of its systems for handling intermodal services, Hamburg Süd partnered with Capgemini to develop a software solution for the planning, operational management, and monitoring of intermodal transport.

The new global standard processes harmonize procedures, standardize services and achieve an even higher level of customer service. In addition to process optimization, the new processes focus on automating manual activities and improving the user experience in the new system. Previously complex and time-consuming processes are now managed in a user-friendly, browser-based interface.

Overview

Client: Hamburg Südamerikanische Dampfschiffahrts-Gesellschaft

Industry: Shipping

Region: Germany

Client challenge:

Hamburg Süd wanted to modernize the systems it used for handling intermodal services. The existing systems needed to be replaced while new standard processes were still being defined.

Solution:

Capgemini implemented a cloud-based software solution for Hamburg Süd for the planning, operational management, and monitoring of intermodal transport services. An agile approach allowed the team to begin software development during the process standardization and take short-term decisions into account.

Results:

- The combination of separate systems results in operational efficiency and cost savings
- The comprehensive application improves user experience
- Integration of the solution into the existing IT landscape

"Due to the very close cooperation and flexibility shown by Capgemini, we were able to quickly address teething problems which are common when rolling out new software. We shared a common goal, and this created a very good teamwork and collaboration which resulted in the best combination of best practice and innovation."

Tracey Rank
GLOBE Program Manager,
Hamburg Süd



Agile approach allowed project to begin during process standardization

As the old system had to be urgently replaced, it was necessary to start developing the solution before the new standard processes had been completely defined. Hamburg Süd and Capgemini therefore chose an agile project setup based on Scrum methodology in which decisions from the ongoing process standardization were directly incorporated into the sprints and the solution on short notice.

Close collaboration and established scrum teams ensure success

Nowadays custom software is implemented within a fitting global delivery model, which is also the proven strategy for Capgemini. The project combined local proximity to the specialist teams and the required expertise from Scrum teams in Capgemini's Agile Delivery Center in Wrocław, Poland. The on-site team worked with Hamburg Süd to describe business requirements in the form of user stories and handed them over to the Scrum teams. The close and reliable cooperation between Hamburg Süd and Capgemini employees with proven industry expertise laid the foundation for successful product development.

A major advantage of agile development is that the current product status can be rapidly validated. This means that necessary corrections can be quickly made at short notice, which would otherwise only become apparent at a late stage and result in higher costs for implementation. During regular exchanges with the regional process managers and end users, as well as during joint testing, the team reviewed sprint results and completed necessary adjustments in the following sprints. The result is a solution which fully covers the end-user needs and has a high level of acceptance.

Cloud-based solution and integration with core systems

Microsoft Azure and the Capgemini framework `devonfw` provided the technical platform. This open source-based framework provides many of the basic building blocks necessary for custom development and enabled the scrum teams to focus fully on business logic implementation beginning with the very first sprint.

Integrating a new system into the existing application landscape is always an important part of a project. In order to offer the intermodal services to customers in a single, integrated solution, the solution had to be connected to various existing systems, including the existing Transport Management System (TMS). One challenge in particular was that the new system operated in the Azure cloud while the existing systems operated in Hamburg Süd's data center, creating a hybrid cloud environment. This was solved by developing a loosely coupled architecture using modern REST and queuing technologies.

Worldwide rollout adapted for local conditions and Covid-19

The first phase of the system rollout took place in Mexico, during which Capgemini and Hamburg Süd employees from the headquarters supported the rollout over a period of several weeks on location.

The new solution resulted in improvements in service quality, heightened operational efficiency, and a higher degree of transport optimization in the first few days. Two separate IT systems no longer have to be used to process export and import orders. The two functions have been interlinked, realizing cost savings when commissioning external intermodal service providers.

End users have also been impressed by the modern, browser-based, and fully integrated application. Apart from the significantly improved user experience, Hamburg Süd is now able to provide customers with information more quickly and comprehensively.

The solution was successively rolled out worldwide during the following phases. Specific local features and requirements were implemented in additional sprints and made available for the corresponding rollouts.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these rollouts could not be supported on site as planned. Instead, the rollouts were performed remotely, which later proved to be a cost-effective and practical approach. The rollout of the intermodal system was successfully completed worldwide within a few months.

Capgemini has been operating the intermodal solution for Hamburg Süd in an innovative DevOps approach since mid-2020. In addition to comprehensive support services for key and end users, Hamburg Süd and Capgemini are now focused on continuing to develop the product with the product owner while aiming to constantly improve the customer experience.

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About Hamburg Süd

All the companies and brands of Hamburg Süd represent quality first and foremost. First-class products and a strong focus on customer service with a personal touch are what set the Hamburg Süd Group apart. For example, with over 250 offices around the world, you'll find a branch near you. As one of the leading providers of international marine transportation, the Hamburg Süd offers door-to-door logistics services from a single source.

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