



# ANDRITZ Küsters Uses Idea Development Software\* to Increase the Value of Product Ideation and Enable Greater Process Transparency

## Company Overview

ANDRITZ Küsters is an ANDRITZ Group company based in Krefeld. The enterprise encompasses the non-woven and paper divisions of the former Eduard Küsters Maschinenfabrik GmbH & Co. KG as well as the coating division of Swiss BACHOFEN + MEIER AG. ANDRITZ Küsters can make use of all the products, patents and brand rights covered by these business areas. The focus of all activity is the development and implementation of technologies and facilities for the production and processing of nonwovens, cardboard and paper. The company employs approximately 500 people at its locations in Krefeld (Germany), Spartanburg (US) and Bülach (Switzerland).

## The Business Challenge

ANDRITZ Küsters prides itself on continually generating new solutions for its customers. Such productivity is an everyday part of the company's culture, which focuses on market-driven innovation. As Mr. Dirk Heghmanns, Idea Manager, puts it, "One can be innovative only if one understands the market, one's customers and their challenges. This is why our developers and technology experts are both consultants and trouble shooters."

To facilitate company-wide participation in generating ideas for new products, ANDRITZ Küsters had created a sophisticated idea management process, including an electronic suggestion box. However, the process lacked transparency, making it difficult for employees to locate the ideas they had contributed or track their status. Those responsible for idea evaluation

struggled in the absence of consistent, objective criteria and methods for judging submissions. Moreover, there was no support for collaboration that could help develop ideas entered into the system to increase their value.

## The Solution

As part of its efforts to address process weaknesses, ANDRITZ Küsters decided to deploy idea development software. An executive committee was formed to identify and screen potential options. Emphasis was placed on finding a solution that could not only automate idea capture and management but also improve collaboration and communication. The software the committee selected was initially tested among five innovation managers and three process designers. With minimal training, members of the test group were able to adapt the software to the company's process.

***"From small ideas to large innovation projects, we handle suggestions throughout the year, all of which are competing for the same limited research and development dollars. The software helps us to avoid personal biases in our decision-making process and at the same time, improves communication across our organization."***

***– Mr. Dirk Heghmanns  
Idea Manager***

## The Results

Less than three months after kicking off implementation, ANDRITZ Küsters had rolled out the software to the entire company. Users access the system via an enterprise-wide intranet and discuss ideas online, creating a forum for continuous brainstorming. Computer terminals installed at ANDRITZ Küsters' factory sites allow production teams the opportunity to also share their ideas with other functional areas.

The decision criteria and protocols underpinning ANDRITZ Küsters' idea management system are now standardized. What's more, the system is transparent from start to finish. Users are able to determine what actions were taken on ideas from the time they are entered the system until they are moved to development, eliminated, or stored for future consideration. Mr. Heghmanns says, "From small ideas to large innovation projects, we handle suggestions throughout the year, all of which are competing for the same limited research and development dollars.

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In summary, ANDRITZ Küsters is using idea development software to:

- Automate the idea management process and make it easier to organize, evaluate and prioritize submitted ideas;
- Enable collaboration and improved communication that help increase the value of ideas; and
- Provide process transparency that encourages employees to submit ideas, and allows them to follow the progress of those ideas and the actions taken on them.

\*The solution referenced in this case study was provided by Hype Software, a Sopheon partner and leading provider of idea management software for product development. Sopheon has embedded the Hype software into its Idea Lab™ idea development offering, making it an integral component of Sopheon's Accolade® solution.



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