apetito, Rheine, Germany

Anyone who knows every ingredient should also know how to order them

Company: apetito AG

Industry: Food processing

Products: Frozen ready meals, meal components and catering concepts, including for businesses, hospitals, care homes, nurseries and schools

Number of employees: 5,401

Turnover: 976 million euros

Headquarters: Rheine, Germany

Website: www.apetito.de

CHALLENGES

- Previous system: outdated, no updates, limited support
- Master data: fully manual maintenance of cost centres and user accounts
- User interface: outdated, grey tiles with no product images
- Indirect procurement: no formalised process; orders placed by call and by email
- Transparency: no overview of order status

SOLUTIONS

- SAP Ariba Buying: guided indirect procurement via the Guided Buying interface
- apsolut Solution Modules: automated upload of users and groups, lookup tables directly from SAP ERP
- Integration: over 20 automated standard interfaces between SAP ECC and Ariba
- Approval workflow: the approval status of every order is always visible

BENEFITS

- Efficiency: automated master data reduces the workload of the procurement and IT departments
- Greater user-friendliness: intuitive interface, illustrated catalogues for 1,700 users
- Accurate master data: maintained automatically rather than compiled manually
- Greater control: visible approval status, transparency regarding indirect expenditure
- Scalable foundation: a foundation for the international roll-out and expansion towards source-to-pay

WHY APSOLUT?

- Honesty: clearly stating where apetito itself needs to improve, rather than making sweeping promises
- Equal footing: a project as a joint endeavour, a genuine give-and-take rather than a one-man show
- Practical relevance: a concrete demonstration in the test system rather than mere assertions
- Critical analysis: thorough assessment whether features are nice-to-haves or genuine needs
- Availability: prompt responses and short lines of communication throughout the project

ONLY 2 out of 80 orders had errors on the first day of live operation.

apetito switches its indirect procurement to SAP Ariba Buying: 1,700 users across three countries at launch

apetito is an international food company specialising in high-quality frozen meals and catering solutions for the health, education and business sectors. Anyone who sets the highest standards for their ingredients should apply the same standards to their own procurement process. For a long time, the opposite was true: orders were placed via an outdated legacy system, and everything was managed manually. Since 9 June 2026, around 1,700 users in Germany, the Netherlands and Austria have been placing orders via a standardised, guided platform using SAP Ariba Buying, implemented by apsolut.

The existing solution had evolved over many years and, in some areas, no longer met current requirements. The original implementation team was no longer available, regular updates had not been provided for some time, and a backlog of outstanding issues had built up. As a result, various processes had to be handled manually, even though greater automation would have been possible – for example, when assigning cost centres, creating user accounts or maintaining master data, all of which was managed entirely by apetito. The interface was also part of the problem: items appeared as grey tiles with no images. A situation that Michel Bruning, Project Manager for the SAP Ariba implementation, sums up succinctly: “If all I see on an ordering platform are grey tiles, it doesn’t encourage staff to order anything.”

Ariba was no stranger: the solution had been reviewed twice, but on both occasions a decision and the necessary budget were lacking in the end. The deciding factor was ultimately the “Fusion” transformation project, which aims to migrate the entire company to SAP S/4HANA. The management’s reasoning was as simple as it was logical: If the entire SAP landscape is being upgraded anyway, the neighbouring systems should also be standardised. apetito reversed the sequence and prioritised SAP Ariba Buying. What had been a straggler became one of the forerunners: Ariba was one of the first sub-projects of the Fusion programme to go live.

Around two dozen systems were put through their paces at the outset. The fact that apsolut was awarded the contract was down less to the list of features than to the company’s approach. “What won us over was the transparent communication,” says Bruning. “apsolut told us clearly where we needed to take action ourselves, rather than simply promising that everything was already running smoothly.” “It was a real case of give and take.” Nicolas Mai, who was in charge of the project as project manager on behalf of apsolut, set the tone. His relentless questioning was a constant feature throughout the entire project: Is that really necessary, or just a nice-to-have? A four-day workshop at the start completely overhauled the existing system.

The biggest challenge lay beneath the surface. To ensure that SAP Ariba Buying integrates seamlessly into the existing SAP landscape, over twenty automated standard interfaces were developed between SAP ECC and Ariba, under the responsibility of an apsolut team based in Germany and India. On the apetito side, a deliberately small core team was sufficient: Michel Bruning as project manager, two colleagues from the procurement department and two IT specialists. The first test orders were already running successfully two months before the go-live. The foundations held. The second test bore a name familiar to many companies: master data. What apetito used to laboriously enter by hand is now automatically fed into the system: users and groups are uploaded via an apsolut Solution Module. Such tried-and-tested solution components fill known gaps in the standard SAP system without each project having to reinvent the wheel, which keeps the effort involved within predictable limits. In the end, the go-live was completed on budget and on schedule.

The largest accounting area in the go-live is Germany, with its main site in Rheine and around 17 service centres. Instead of having to apply for an account individually, as was previously the case, anyone with SAP access can now place orders directly, guided by catalogues and approved procurement channels rather than via requests by call and email. The first day went without a hitch, in the best sense of the word: around 200 people were added to the system straight away, just under 80 orders, and only two of them had errors. The key factor is what can be controlled: a visible approval workflow shows the status of an order at any time; automated control and standardised catalogues bring transparency to an area that was previously difficult to keep track of. Suppliers have updated their catalogues and added images; the grey tiles are a thing of the past. Bruning sums it up in three points: “Less manual work in procurement and IT, significantly greater user-friendliness and, at last, clean master data.” This frees up time for the procurement team to focus on what really matters: comparing catalogues and suppliers instead of data maintenance.

The real payoff lies in the plan behind it. What apetito has built up in Germany serves as the blueprint for everything that follows: the UK and Canada are marked on the map, with an estimated 300 to 400 additional users. The next rollouts will build on the same foundation and the same reusable building blocks, requiring significantly less effort than the first time. From a technical point of view, too, the go-live is a starting point, not an end point: a robust, well-managed procurement function within the organisation lays the foundations for expansion in the source-to-pay environment. What was once a system that nobody really understood any more has become a platform on which a company can scale up its indirect procurement step by step. Manual processes give way to automation; automation leads to transparency; and transparency leads to control. In this way, apetito lives up to the same high standards in its own procurement as it has long applied to its end products: quality you can really appreciate.