

Honeywell Aerospace implements the Google Search Appliance to access SAP data – and productivity soars

Honeywell

At a Glance

What they wanted to do

- Improve the overall usability of the SAP ERP system by implementing a world-class search solution
- Improve productivity for the 22,000 aerospace division employees

What they did

- Integrate the Google Search Appliance with the SAP ERP system
- Index 5 million documents (including attachments) in SAP system with plans to expand to 30 million documents housed in SAP, Salesforce, and a WebSphere customer portal

What they accomplished

- Reduced average search time from 15 minutes to 30 seconds
- Improved productivity by saving at least 3,500 hours per week
- Realized further efficiencies by implementing a more formal SAP training process

Business

Honeywell International is a \$37 billion diversified technology and manufacturing leader, serving customers worldwide with aerospace products and services; control technologies for buildings, homes and industry; automotive products; turbochargers; and specialty materials. Based in Morris Township, N.J., Honeywell has 132,000 employees worldwide. Its shares are traded on the New York and London stock exchanges, and it is a component of the S&P 500.

Challenge

With Honeywell Aerospace offering products and services for virtually every aircraft type flying today, the company depends heavily on the SAP ERP system to run its business – from the factory to the customer service center – and to keep its customers' planes in the air. In fact, Honeywell has the largest single instance aerospace and defense SAP deployment in the world.

“The Google Search Appliance has offered us a whole new way in which we can view our transactional data,” Gibson said. “And this in turn will give us new insights and open up new opportunities to improve our profitability and overall business.”—Theo Gibson, Vice President & EMEA

Over 14,000 of the aerospace division's 22,000 employees log in to the SAP database every week, and conduct two million transactions per day; it is Honeywell's busiest database. Yet accessing the data was quite burdensome.

“SAP does not have a native search application,” reported Theo Gibson, Honeywell Aerospace, Vice President, IT Build & EMEA. “So to locate invoices, PO's, delivery documents, etc. it often took representatives 12-14 clicks – or about 15 minutes – to locate a single item. Multiply that by 14,000 employees and you've lost 3,500 hours per week! And that's just for a single document; we can't imagine how much time was being lost for the multiple searches being conducted per day.”

With its “human factor” initiative that aims to make everything easier to use – from internal business systems to the thermostats in our home – Honeywell realized they needed a solid enterprise search solution to make their SAP system easier to use, and the people who use them more productive.

Solution

For its enterprise search solution, Honeywell considered three solutions: SAP, Microsoft FAST, and the Google Search Appliance.

The Aerospace IT team weighed each search solution against cost, interoperability, scalability, and ease of use. Google's appliance-based solution allowed searching across multiple systems (not just SAP), in addition to providing a solution that is easy to scale, deploy, and support.

About Google Search Appliance

With the Google Search Appliance (GSA), the search experience shared by millions across the globe can be harnessed by your individual company with specific enterprise enhancements that make searching easier, intuitive, and customizable. Ready to index most enterprise content right “out of the box,” the GSA turns your company’s intranet or website search engine into a system that is as relevant and reliable as Google’s - with the same ease of use.

For more information visit:

www.google.com/enterprise/search

“At the end of the day, we decided to go with the simplicity of the appliance model produced by the company whose core business is search,” Gibson said. “The feedback we got during our proof of concept is that the Google Search Appliance produced much more relevant results and, from a usability point of view, was the ‘cleaner’ search experience.”

It took only 20 hours for the Google Enterprise Search Deployment team and Honeywell Aerospace IT team to figure out what would be needed to successfully build a connector that successfully integrated the Google Search Appliance with the SAP system. As a defense contractor, Honeywell appreciated that the GSA seamlessly integrated with existing security and access control systems.

Within weeks, Honeywell had successfully implemented the Google Search Appliance and indexed 5 million documents (with the associated attachments) in the SAP system, with plans to expand to 10 million documents. They plan to index another 20 million documents that live in other critical business applications such as Salesforce and their customer portal.

“Our customer and product support people are typically in all three systems, constantly going back and forth. To have a one-stop search solution means they will spend less time searching for sales orders and more time helping our customers,” Gibson said.

Honeywell also implemented several out-of-the-box features that enhance the search experience including:

- **Automatic Spell Check** – Representatives are constantly misspelling vendors’ names – the “did you mean” feature of Google saves an immense amount of time.
- **Self-Learning Scorer** – This automatically fine tunes relevance and scoring by analysing user behavior and specific links that users click on.
- **Dynamic Navigation** – This enhances the search experience by allowing the user to drill down on search results by selecting parameters like Purchase Order, Invoice, Sales Order or Shipper.

“What’s incredible is how the Google relevance has allowed people to find exactly what they’re looking for instantly. And it works even if they only have a tail number. Before we used to have to ask customers to go back and look at their purchase orders to give us the exact invoice number before we could find anything,” Gibson said.

Benefits

Honeywell saw immediate results as the average search time was reduced from 15 minutes per search to 30 seconds per search.

“If you take the 14,000 users that login and multiply hundreds of hits a day at 30 seconds versus the 15 minutes it used to take – that’s an amazing number in terms of productivity savings,” Gibson gleefully reported. With the increased time savings, both sales and customer service representatives are spending more time servicing their customers and negotiating procurement pricing, which is having a significant impact on the bottom line.

In addition, Honeywell has streamlined their ability to train employees how to use the SAP system by having functional leads store their documentation in the SAP Solutions Manager and making it searchable via the Google Search Appliance.

“In the past training was by word-of-mouth,” Gibson said.

The Google Search Appliance has also offered so-called “soft” benefits. For example, by improving the overall usability of the SAP system, users are now more inclined to upload their forms and data into the system rather than store that information locally. Also, they can now view product information that was previously not searchable.

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