



Business challenge

As a global supplier of automotive audio and information communications equipment, Alpine Electronics needed to ensure that its quality management system (QMS) met customer expectations transnationally.

Transformation

Alpine deployed cloud-based IBM® Blueworks Live™ software as a service (SaaS) to model, visualize, control and unify its business processes.

Business benefits

Ensures

common quality rules and business processes globally

Streamlines

cross-organization communication

Increases

business efficiency

Alpine Electronics, Inc.

Alpine consolidates global QMS processes with IBM business process software

Alpine Electronics, Inc. is the consumer electronics subsidiary of Japanese electronic component manufacturer Alps Electric, specializing in car audio and navigation systems.

“IBM Blueworks Live is a major driving force behind our company-wide reorganization.”

— Shinichi Kaminaga, head of quality assurance department, Alpine Electronics

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Meeting automotive customer demands

Automobile manufacturers worldwide stake their brands' reputations on the quality of the Alpine audio and navigation systems they install in their vehicles. For that reason, automakers place stringent quality and delivery demands on the Iwaki, Japan-based Alpine. In turn, the company must ensure that its quality management system (QMS) meets customers' demands.

Alpine divides its QMS and business processes—which its automotive customers audit and, to a large extent, control—into three categories: management process, customer oriented process and support process. Within those process categories are approximately 120 subcategories. Alpine needed to consolidate control



over its QMS so that it could quickly adapt it to meet localized auditing requirements.

“In order to advance the quality of the whole car, auto manufacturers have started to take more control over suppliers' QMS and business

processes,” says Shinichi Kaminaga, head of Alpine's quality assurance department. Alpine had deployed an ISO9001-based quality management system 20 years prior, but as the enterprise grew globally the business evolved and the 20 year-old QMS system proved inadequate.

“To satisfy our customers, we need to constantly improve and optimize our QMS business processes at the global and local levels, first by identifying them, then by gauging the maturity of those processes, their effectiveness at the operational level and their degree of alignment with our and our customers' business objectives.”

Building a process transformation framework

Alpine visualizes and controls its QMS business processes with cloud-based IBM Blueworks Live software. With the software as a service (SaaS) solution, Alpine can review and integrate business processes globally. The company selected Blueworks Live because it offered intuitive tools that fundamentally change how employees approach their work.

“When we viewed this from the users’ point of view, it became obvious that IBM Blueworks Live is instinctively easy to understand as a modeling tool,” says Tadashi Yoshioka, Global QMS Group Manager. “After all, it is the users themselves who draw the flow, and we want even



inexperienced users to have an easy time using it.” All 6000 users of the QMS system can access the most recent edition of a process.

Moreover, according to Katsuhiko Noji, leader of this QMS project, the company easily migrated its existing business processes and

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management methods to the cloud-based Blueworks Live platform. The modeling capabilities of Blueworks Live were very intuitive and reduced the modeling time of the quality management process to about one month. This QMS project transformed conventional static process management into dynamic process management with a continuous update mechanism.

Balancing global and regional processes

Takumi Abe, director of Alpine Information Systems, says, “Blueworks is the first cloud-based,

SaaS solution we’ve deployed. In general, we have concerns about service levels and data maintenance of SaaS solutions. We created our own guidelines and standards for adopting a SaaS solution, and Blueworks Live fulfilled them.”

According to Mr. Abe, there is an ongoing digital transformation underway at Alpine. “Within the information systems department we believe there is a need to enhance the operational efficiency of the conventional IT while also continuing to shift to digitization.”

Solution components

- IBM® Blueworks Live™

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Take the next step

To learn more about Blueworks Live software, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website:

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IGC12378-USEN-01

