

## » Blue Ant's user-friendliness won us over right from the first test.«

As one of the largest and most popular kitchen manufacturers in Germany, Nolte Küchen in East Westphalia produces high-quality fitted kitchens at an attractive price. Surveys by the German Institute for Service Quality (DISQ) have named Nolte Germany's most popular kitchen brand several times. The company was founded in 1958 and is still in family ownership today, now in its fourth generation. Its kitchens are exported to over 60 countries world-wide. The company is part of the Nolte Group, based in Germersheim.

We spoke to Uwe Bojarra, Head of Information Technology and Jörg Strakeljahn, Head of Software Development at Nolte Küchen GmbH & Co. KG about their use of Blue Ant.



## Case Study

### Mr. Bojarra, what is your role at Nolte and what is your IT department responsible for?

I am responsible for the IT departments of Nolte Küchen and our sister company Express Küchen. The IT department is responsible for the development and support of the entire ERP environment and for all infrastructure issues.

### Mr. Strakeljahn, what is your role?

I am in charge of the software development team, which consists of 14 staff. We take care of our own in-house ERP system, which includes accounting interfaces and the internal sales force (kitchen planning) through to production and dispatch.

**Mr. Bojarra, what are the primary issues that you work on in your projects? What is their scope?**

Our IT and Operating Technology (process planning) departments primarily use the ticket system in Blue Ant, for example when procuring a new machine line. Our projects take several years from idea to implementation, since the planning phase, production phase and commissioning take a lot of time. When procuring a machine line, the entire coordination (including that of the external service provider) takes over the operating technology. This was also one of the decisive reasons for introducing Blue Ant when we did.

**Mr Strakeljahn, what was the reason for introducing a multi-project management solution such as Blue Ant?**

We were already using a solution based on Lotus Notes. However, the users from the specialist departments did not like the system due to the complicated user interface. Blue Ant's user-friendliness, on the other hand, won us over right from the first test. Another reason was that planning large projects with Excel lists or MS Project was seen as insufficient. Hardly anyone had access to the exact project status.

**How do you use the Blue Ant ticket system, Mr. Bojarra?**

In the IT department we have a hotline (first level) that creates tickets for our team (second level). Every day we receive a lot of requests via the ticket system. 14 000 tickets have been created since April 2016. Then there are two other specialist departments that work for our sister company Express Küchen and, unlike us, bill Express Küchen on an hourly basis. They use the ticket sys-

tem for booking working hours, so, as a reporting and controlling tool.

**You have been using Blue Ant since 2007. How did the introduction of Blue Ant go back then?**

Unfortunately, we cannot personally say anything about the beginnings. At that time, IT provided only the infrastructure. But because we previously had a ticket system based on Lotus Notes, the methods were largely established. We also already had corresponding process descriptions. We then transferred these to Blue Ant. In the beginning not everything worked to its full extent, but Blue Ant developed further and we came closer to our goal.

**Blue Ant provides a lot of functions... are there plans for the future to use Blue Ant on a larger scale, Mr. Bojarra?**

It is the express wish of the management to use Blue Ant as a company-wide project management tool. As a result, many employees in the operative business now assume the function of project managers. In the past, of course, we also used Blue Ant for technical projects. Now we want to increase the accountability of the department, hence the project manager taking over the operative activities, which will unburden us. At the moment we are looking at which training measures are necessary for this and are thinking not only of the tool, but also of methodological knowledge. Our project managers come from different areas and have different knowledge. All of them should be included in these measures bearing in mind their differing perspectives.

**Thank you both for talking to us.**