

Portrait of Werner Strub, CEO, ABAS Software AG

Date: 08-31-2010 10:31 AM CET

Category: [IT, New Media & Software](#)

Press release from: [ABAS Software AG](#)



Karlsruhe – with every detail in mind and keeping an overview of his many tasks, that is how many employees see Werner Strub. He wouldn't be able to handle the work volume as CEO of the ABAS Software AG in any other way. Unfortunately that leaves little time for his passions: riding motorbikes, paragliding and sailplaning. That despite his many tasks the focus still lies on his employees is noticed when you watch him walking through the corridors of the ABAS Software AG. Each of the around 115 employees in Karlsruhe is greeted by name. Also at the constantly growing events, like the abas Partner Day with around 300 participants and the abas Customer Forum with around 1000 people at times, he personally welcomes customers, partners and employees. He makes no difference when speaking to a manager or an administrator. What he values in a person it not what position they have, but what character they have. If one were to describe the 56 year old in two words, it would be: a character person.

“We didn't feel like pioneers”

Werner Strub and Peter Forscht were the two masterminds of the founding of Abakus GmbH, enterprise for data processing systems, which was renamed ABAS six months later. „I had just finished my studies in electrical power engineering and wanted to apply for jobs within this industry. At the same time I always had the idea of setting up something myself. I was immediately fascinated as Peter Forscht approached me about doing a project together. We wanted to go into the world independently as service providers. We didn't feel like pioneers, we thought that IT trend was over. Looking back that has never been the case. Opportunities through IT are as multifaceted as the constantly changing world. I was chosen as the managing director as I was the only one who had completed his studies at this point and had a sense of margins and break-even-points”, remembered Strub with a smile. 30 years have passed since making this decision. The company developed into a global mid-sized ERP provider and Werner Strub became the CEO of the ABAS Software AG with around 680 employees worldwide. A review of the stages of the agile company who became a global ERP provider:

A convincing software solution

„The more sales orders we got, the more the idea of developing an own product formed. Relatively soon after the establishment of the company, we began to develop an integrated business software for the computer manufacturer Kienzle.

As Erich Sartori and Reinhard Harms presented us with their software solution and convinced us. We decided to work together. System 3 developed the software and we took over the sales for the implementation at Kontron, a computer manufacturer at that time. Our own projects continued at the same time. With continued success of the System 3 product, we gave up our projects bit by bit,” Strub said.

The first ups and downs

„Our business software became continually more efficient and the sales orders books were filling up. The positive economic development was massively influenced through the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1987 we strengthened our team by adding the sales professional, Manfred Starke. He immediately recognized the opportunities in the East after the fall of the wall. Within two years we had gained over 50 new customers throughout Germany. We established two subsidiaries - in Alzenau near Frankfurt and in Hamburg. Our revenue increased six fold within three years, between 1989 and 1992. The rapid development came to an halt in mid 1992. As if a button had been pressed, the new sales orders diminished from one day to the next. The revenue sank in 1993 by about 40 percent in comparison to the previous year,” Strub describes the dramatic collapse.

The operating costs were too high without new sales orders. The experienced corporate troubleshooter, Wolfgang Dannemann, who steered the fortune of System 3, developed a concept to get ABAS back on track. The hardware business, an area which produced high revenue, but low margins was stopped. The time period from acquiring the hardware, delivering it and getting the payment through the end customer was too long and generated receivables. The measures taken were effective immediately. From 1994 until today, ABAS is making a profit!

Our employees are our capital

abas management learnt a lesson from these years. Since then he has kept a close eye on finances and avoids tempting offers or quick decisions. „In the following years we began to create a solid financial buffer and to concentrate on our core competencies. The aim was a high equity ratio. Our capital is in the heads of our employees. We have no industrial park or real estate which we can provide the banks with as security. The equity guarantees us independence from banks and investors. This is the basis for us developing our software independently of external interests and the reason why we can afford to orient ourselves solely to customer requirements. These days (2009/2010) we have an equity ratio of over 80 percent. That put us in a strong position.”

Independent abas partners

„The intensive expansion of the German partner network since 1994 has brought us forward significantly. The advantages are clear: Each partner is his own businessman – he thinks and trades economically and works success oriented. In comparison to the headquarters, the ABAS Software AG, he is able to implement the customer interests in his own way without instructions from me as the boss. A good example of this is the discussion which we had in 1997 about the introduction of a graphical interface. abas developers were faced with the task of following the trend started by Microsoft of using a graphical user interface. We had difficulties with our ASCII interface and UNIX platform at the time and almost had a sales crisis. Our development thought that integrating a graphical user interface into our software was a high hurdle to jump. In-house there was the consideration of developing a completely new software. We met up with our software partners to present the idea of a new software. The idea was rejected immediately. We were warned to retain our continuity which we had promised our customers. We would have lost our upgradeability with a new software – one of our main characteristics. Using our own software we then created a graphical user interface and retained the in-house advantages. A decision which without our partners may have gone in a different direction. Generally, our software gained a high level of quality through consultation with our partners”, resumed Strub.

Reorganization into a stock corporation

In 1996 something that has actually already been an entity for many years, fused together: The ABAS GmbH and System 3 merged. „We kept the name ABAS because it was already established on the market. With the decision to form a stock corporation, we consciously created the option for our employees of having the chance to have shares in the company. It is, and was never, our goal to go on the stock exchange. The value of being independent of investors is more important to us than ‘fast money’. We place value on healthy growth“, Strub summarizes the basic considerations. Werner Strub became the CEO of the stock corporation.

ABAS operates internationally

„The next stage is now the development of our international business. The first sales order for the ABAS Software AG abroad was initiated by Knorr Bremsen, a partner of ours at that time. Its new subsidiary in Hungary was to also be equipped

with the abas Business Software. More foreign sales orders were received in the following years by the USA, France and England. First we made our experiences. Around 5 years after the first sales order was concluded in Hungary, we decided to strategically approach the foreign business. We had our first foreign partners in Hungary 1998, Spain and the USA followed in 2002. The most important decision was building up a network of American partners. The intention required a high financial input level by the ABAS Software AG. A decision which was checked in detail by the supervisory board. From this point in time we invested in our foreign business and our number of partners abroad grew constantly. The first international partner day was held in 2004 in Bali. We expect a double figure growth for 2011 for our international business. “

Solid finances, developed principles and quality

„The lessons we learnt from the past are the solid basis of our successful growth since 1993. The development of the equity ratio has helped us survive the worldwide financial crisis year of 2009. We have a good starting position to establish ourselves in the international market as a midsize, high quality ERP provider over the next few years. Also in foreign markets we will maintain our established traditions: building up partnerships, moderate but secure growth and the orientation to customer requirements. Especially internationally, it is important to have partners on location which are familiar with the local laws and mentality of the country.

While the globetrotter, Peter Forscht, COO of the ABAS Software AG, ensures that ABAS finds new partners worldwide and builds up the international network, Werner Strub ensures that the finances internationally remain in order.

Werner Strub: flexible, cooperative and responsible

Only a cooperative being can sustain the ABAS structures of responsibility and independence. Flat hierarchies remain important to the company founders for ABAS, even if this is no longer easy to realize with 115 employees in Karlsruhe. The door of the CEO is always open to everyone, there is no assistant guarding the entrance. Strub expects his employees to work independently and to cooperate with each other. „I have never met anyone that has mastered such an immense learning process”, remembers Wolfgang Dannemann and talks about his lifelong experience as a corporate troubleshooter: „There is nothing which can hold back more than an inflexible management. Werner Strub’s flexibility and his ability to define targets have significantly added to the business success of the ABAS Software AG.”

Company profile

Founded in 1980, ABAS is a leading provider of the most flexible and upgradeable ERP and eBusiness solutions on the market. ABAS serves mid-market manufacturers and distributors focusing on discrete, Engineer-to-order, Make-to-Order, Assemble-to-Order, and Job Shop Manufacturing environments. ABAS provides an unique solution for international customers through its multi-country functionality and global partner network. ABAS is uniquely qualified to successfully implement international ERP projects. No other company has the combination of a unified partner network, strategic orientation, globally enabled software, and international implementation methodology that defines the roadmap to success. ABAS provides quick ROI in that it is easy to learn, use, customize and upgrade. More than 2,300 customers have chosen ABAS as their long term ERP provider and work successfully with the internationally applicable abas Business Software. ABAS Software AG in Karlsruhe employs more than 120 people, and together with over 50 abas partners ABAS employs approx. 600 employees worldwide. The abas software partners provide a wide range of services including implementation, customization, hardware and network support. ABAS also provides on-site support and ensures short reaction times and high service quality. International partners in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Spain, Iran, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Hong Kong, Australia, Mexico, Chile, Canada and the USA represent the ABAS Software AG throughout the world. The partner network is continuously being expanded.

Product profile - abas Business Software

abas Business Software includes abas ERP for production, abas Distribution for distribution, wholesale, and service companies, and the eBusiness solution abas eB. abas ERP is an ERP application designed specifically for manufacturers in the Assemble-to-Order, Make-to-Order and Engineer-to-Order environment. abas Business Software is priced to fit most budgets while delivering full ERP functionality. It is flexible, adaptable, internationally applicable and a save investment for the future. The clear structure and well thought-out implementation strategy of the system enable a short implementation period as well as trouble-free integration into the company structure. New functions and technologies are constantly added to the standard software with each new upgrade. As a result, abas users are always using the most up-to-date product. abas Business Software is currently offered in 28 languages. ABAS has been a supporter of the open source operating system Linux since 1995. Approximately 80% of over 2,300 abas installations are based in Linux.

abas Business Software - range of services: Sales/sales order processing/shipping, purchasing/purchase order processing, warehouse management, scheduling, logistics, materials management/MRP, production/PPC, financial accounting, fixed asset accounting, cost accounting, controlling, eBusiness, portal, etc.

ONE GLOBE – ONE NETWORK – ONE ABAS

ABAS is uniquely qualified to successfully implement international projects. No other company has the combination of a unified partner network, strategic orientation, globally enabled software, and international implementation methodology that defines the roadmap to success. ABAS Software AG is a leading provider of the most flexible and upgradeable ERP solutions on the market today. ABAS serves mid-market manufacturers and distributors focusing on discrete, Engineer-to-order, Make-to-Order, Assemble-to-Order, and Job Shop Manufacturing environments. ABAS provides a unique solution for international customers through its multi-country functionality and global partner network. ABAS provides quick ROI in that it is easy to learn, use, customize and upgrade. More than 2,300 customers have chosen ABAS as their long term ERP provider and work successfully with the internationally applicable abas Business Software. ABAS, established in 1980, has become a global network of companies. The global ABAS network has more than 600 employees and 50 software partners. abas software partners provide a wide range of services including implementation, customization, hardware and network support. ABAS also provides on-site support and high quality services. International partners in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, the Netherlands, France, Italy, Spain, Iran, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Hong Kong, Australia, Mexico, Chile, Canada and the USA represent the ABAS Software AG throughout the world. The partner network is continuously being expanded.

ABAS Software AG
James D Jamaleldine
Suedendstr. 42
76135 Karlsruhe/Germany
Tel.: +49 721/9 67 23-0
Fax +49 721/9 67 23-100
pr@abas-software.com
www.abas-software.com

[You can find this press release here](#)