



Camunda BPM at the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property

- Control of intellectual property rights management
- BPM for business-driven development
- System integration without ESB

The Background

The Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IPI) has its headquarters in Bern, Switzerland. It is the address for intellectual property (trademarks, patents and designs) in Switzerland and partly also for the corresponding international applications. It examines national applications, grants intellectual property rights and administers them.

Since 2014, the IPI has used the Camunda BPM platform to run their core processes in the area of intellectual property rights management. The following interview was conducted with the responsible project leader, Jürgen Horwath.

The Challenge

“We had a proprietary solution for the execution of business processes. Communication between the business side and IT was very difficult. The complexity and cost of process implementation was very high. The operation of the processes and the development of changes and improvements were difficult and depended on the expertise of specific persons. We have complex business processes that change frequently and generally very complex security requirements. Their compliance was difficult to monitor. In order to achieve a more business-driven development, we opted for the use of Business Process Management (BPM).”

Why Camunda BPM ?

“Initially we evaluated a number of BPM suites (e.g. Bosch SI, IBM and edorasware) and immediately knew what we did not want:

- Lose our strength: We have a professional R&D department and fully use the possibilities of Java EE. This shouldn't change.
- Too much operational complexity: We wanted to avoid a proprietary solution and searched instead for an approach that could be integrated into our existing IT environment and technology stack.
- A manufacturer-specific notation: We wanted to be as close to the BPMN standard as possible.

Camunda is the only manufacturer that truly and consistently supports BPMN 2.0 and does not propagate the “Zero Code BPM” myth. Camunda did not force us to change our IT environment or technology stack, but offered a fully integrated BPM engine with optional tools.

This allowed us to benefit from BPM without having to adjust to specific products. We could freely decide which products and technologies we wanted to use for UI, monitoring, reporting, search etc. Additionally it offered integration with Java EE, which meant we were able to fully benefit from Java EE.”

The Implementation

“Our project was set up as follows:

- Programme Manager: 1 FTE
- Technical Project Management: 1 FTE
- IT Architect: 1 FTE
- Business project management and business process owners: 15 FTE
- Business Analysts: 2 FTE
- Software Developers: 6 FTE

Technically, we have had no significant challenges with Camunda BPM. As an organization, we had to understand that management and business process owners can now directly and precisely communicate with the software developers. The introduction of BPM in an organization is challenging, but once the people involved learn of the benefits, it is a lot of fun.“

The Impact

“We mainly achieved three things:

- Transparency in the development and operation: We are now actually able to live business-driven process implementation. The speed of implementation is less important than the much higher quality of the result, so that fewer changes are necessary. If changes occur, these are of a higher quality and consider all aspects and requirements in a holistic manner.
- Thanks to the architecture of Camunda BPM we could abstain from using integration middleware such as an enterprise service bus

(ESB). Due to Camunda BPM’s concepts for asynchronous processing, an additional ESB is simply not necessary.

- The operation has become much more effective due to Camunda Cockpit. The complete monitoring of the involved IT systems takes place entirely via the monitoring of business processes in Camunda Cockpit.

In summary, it can be said that Camunda BPM allows the use of BPM without any special dependencies. As an organization, we benefit from BPM and still managed to keep our strengths. We have a business driven development process: What we develop is business motivated and transparent for everyone and as a result, reliable and of higher quality.

We defined more than 100 business processes in this project. Per day, this means 5,000 actual processes (process instances). Operationally, approximately 250 users are involved in the business processes.”

Learn more

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