

RENOVATION OF SALES AND PRODUCTION PROCESSES IN ROBETA

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Abstract:

Renovation and upgrading of business or of work processes enables companies to manufacture and supply individualized products and to reduce production cycle time and labour costs. In the example of Robeta d. o. o. we analysed the existing state of the process of selling and ordering a motorhome (creating an order for the final product) and the production process.

We have prepared a model of the improved order creation process. We have developed a B2B configurator that enables the implementation of a standardized and automated order process and the integration of all necessary data between the manufacturer and the seller. By developing changes and additions, we have completely eliminated the differences between the seller, the buyer and the manufacturer of the Robeta motorhomes. By introducing improvements and computerization of the order creation process for business users, we have improved the relationship between the manufacturer (the company Robeta) and the end user (natural person). With this, we contributed to improving the user experience in B2B and B2C relationships and reducing the costs of the sales and production process.

Keywords:

Renovation and upgrading of work processes, digitalization, informatisation, automation, configurator

1 Introduction

Successful companies know how to adapt quickly and constantly strive to develop and maintain a competitive advantage as much as possible in areas such as cost efficiency, quality, systematicity, flexibility, innovation« [1].

Companies see the renewal of work processes as opportunities to gain a competitive advantage [1]. Manufacturing companies that renovate and upgrade business processes with the needs of customers, service providers, dealers or distributors, increase customer satisfaction with product quality, improve dealer responsiveness and speed of delivery to customers [2]. Also Sujova et al. (2019) write that by analysing and renovating the production process, they increased the company's performance and value, which had a positive impact on the company's financial situation. It will be possible to order material on time and plan production capacities, and consequently reduce the necessary time, labour and material costs [3].

In order to solve the challenge of companies to provide individualized products and the related internal variety of products that are the market trend

of buyers, it is crucial to develop a coherent order configuration process [4]. As Singh Sodhi (2020) writes, the rapid advancement of manufacturing technologies and applications in the industry is of great help to companies in increasing productivity. At the same time, advances in technologies and applications improve the added value of activities and reduce waste [5].

The concept of business process renewal (BPR) has been with us since around 1990 [6]. Many manufacturing and service companies (e.g. Hella, Gorenje, Veyance Technologies Europe) [7, 8, 9] report on the positive effects of renovation, computerization and automation of business processes. These effects are manifested in a focus on customer requirements (creating a more customer-friendly environment), improving product quality, unifying processes and reducing production time and costs (shortening the supply chain, eliminating delays) and reducing the complexity of the organization's operations, resulting in better competitiveness and greater viability companies on the market [10].

The problem of the studied company Robeta d. o. o. is that the seller cannot find out from the sales catalogue what the individual version of the serial model of the motorhome looks like (which options of furniture elements it can have built-in). When configuring the order, there is therefore a problem of constructing the ordered version of the motorhome, which leads to delays in the production process. Due to the non-systematic creation of

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the order (there is no standardized form), there are discrepancies in production between the ordered and installed components. As a result, there are cost discrepancies between the planned and actually produced motor home.

In this paper, we present an analysis of the current state of sales processes, ordering a motorhome, creating an order for a motorhome and production. The purpose of our analysis was to create a model of an improved order creation process. We present the development of the configurator in more detail, present the introduction of the developed form and the configurator, and the achieved effects of upgrading the work processes, and suggest possibilities for further improvement. We assume that by introducing improvements, we will enable the improvement of the user experience in the B2B and B2C relationship and reduce the costs of the sales and production process.

2 Theoretical foundations

The concept of business process renewal first appeared in the early 1990s. First in the private and later in the public sector. Even then, the concept was presented as a tool for companies to improve the operation of work processes [11].

Teng et al. [6] define the renewal of business processes as a critical analysis and radical transformation of existing business processes to achieve significant improvements for the successful achievement of set goals [6], with the support of information technology [12]. The goal of the renovation is to achieve a significant improvement in the company's performance based on the reduction of costs in processes and the increase in the quality of the company's products and services [6].

The United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainable development as »a process of change where the use of resources, the direction of technological development and changes in institutions are coordinated and thereby enable development for future generations« [13]. Renovation of work processes is important for maintaining competitive advantage, sustainable operation [14] and survival of the company in the market [15]. By renovating business processes, a company can achieve greater added value [14].

Bhaskar [16] writes that many companies have realized the importance of improved quality in order to compete with the competition in the global market. Business Process Reengineering has become the best quality improvement tool that contributes to improving the business performance of a company in order to maintain a competitive edge in this global era. As Al-Halalmeh [17] writes, most com-

panies in the world set strategies for the renewal of business processes in order to ensure efficient and successful satisfaction of customer requirements/needs. A comprehensive approach to changes, taking into account the principles of digital transformation, includes the company's strategic directions, business processes, technology, employees and organizational culture [18].

By renovating work processes, the company reduces business costs by reducing the consumption of inputs (materials, people), which is the result of greater efficiency of work processes with the support of information technology and, as a result, higher quality of work (fewer complaints, waste) [17]. By renovating work processes, the company improves business processes. A study by Sungau et al. [11] showed that the renewal of work processes increases the speed of delivery of services/products to customers. The authors emphasize that work process reengineering is an important technique that companies must adopt to improve business processes in terms of faster delivery of services/products. Al-Halalmeh [17] also notes that, in addition to simplifying approaches and increasing efficiency, the renewal of business processes also has an impact on the quality of products and services.

Among the main benefits of implementing the renewal of work processes, companies include [19]:

- ▶ the opportunity to change the organizational structure of the company's operations and work procedures (restructuring of work and tasks in the direction of the company's set goals),
- ▶ survival in a dynamic environment (with increasing globalization and the development of modern technologies, the business environment is changing; opportunities arise for every company to improve the way it operates),
- ▶ identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats,
- ▶ cost reduction (the main goal of the renovation is to achieve a better business result, which is an opportunity for every company to restructure the process and organizational structure of its operations and thus achieve an increase in efficiency (the importance of the effect of process renovation on cost reduction is also highlighted by Alhawamdeh [17])).

3 Methods

In product and production development, companies use the approach of informatization and automation of business processes, which is mainly focused on achieving technological changes. Such an approach is no longer appropriate and has become insufficient. We propose an approach that takes into account the process and business aspects of the necessary changes. Such an

approach, which is not only technological, enables significantly better interaction between science, development entities, technologists and buyers involved in change processes.

The purpose of the paper is to analyse the existing state (AS-IS) of the sales and production processes of motor homes. We used the methods of observing, measuring and analyzing business processes and carrying out substantive interviews with the employees of the manufacturing company and with the employees of the retailer. Based on the analysis of the existing situation, our aim is to create a model of the improved process (TO-BE) and show in more detail the solution to the problem of the existing sales and production process. We are interested in whether, by developing the order form in the configurator and by data integration between different information systems, we can achieve positive effects (reduce the number of working hours and costs) of both studied processes and improve the user experience.

For capturing the current state, we employed the method of direct observation and execution of work processes within the production environment of the company under study. To model the business processes, we utilized the software solution Aris [20]. It enables the modeling of processes in a standardized format known as BPMN (Business Process Modeling and Notation), which is comprehensible to all users including business users, analysts involved in planning and documenting business processes, as well as developers of software solutions for business processes [21].

The proposed process approach with the development of the B2B configurator was tested and implemented in industrial practice. A prerequisite for the use of the developed solution in an industrial environment is clearly defined conditions for the implementation of integration between different information systems and fully organized master data. The solution is currently operating in a motorhome manufacturing environment. In the future, it would also make sense to develop it for use in other industries that need individualization of their products.

4 Results

The results of Renovation of sales and production processes in Robeta through the implementation of a configurator indicate a reduction in the effective ordering time and a decrease in process costs.

4.1 The sales model of existing trading and production (AS-IS)

The model of the existing sales process (Figure 1) was developed based on knowledge and analysis of

work procedures, as well as interviews with employees who carry out the procedures.

The sales process begins with the merchant (*Figure 1*), who creates an order with the customer. The dealer forwards the created customer order to the distributor by e-mail (as a chassis and interior order or as a chassis order). The merchant only writes down the order type in an email (non-standardized).

The distributor accepts the merchant's order and checks the technological adequacy of the configured order (the adequacy of the set of elements from the sales catalogue). If the dealer's order is appropriate, the distributor forwards the order (via e-mail) to Robeta's administrative department, where it is manually recorded in the internal information system. Changing the chassis of the vehicle from here on in the sales process is no longer possible.

The Robeta company orders a chassis from the supplier, and based on the confirmation of the order, the administration inspects the approved and delivered vehicle chassis. In the administration, they create and hand over a physical document in paper form to the control department for vehicle acceptance from the supplier. All vehicle chassis that have arrived from the supplier are inspected by the company's incoming inspection (compliance of the vehicle configuration with the order and possible damage).

After entering the chassis or chassis and interior order, the administration forwards the printout of the order from the internal information system to the distributor, who reviews the order again and passes it on to the dealer.

The preparation of the monthly production plan takes place in the manufacturer's administration in cooperation with the production director. When determining the monthly production plan, the administration manually (prints on paper documents) review all received customer orders against the delivered vehicle chassis and print out the missing data. On average, this order creation and confirmation process is performed at least three times for one customer.

When the merchant confirms the order (retailer confirmation order confirmation activity), he forwards the clearance letter to the distributor (retailer to distributor order confirmation activity). The distributor forwards the confirmed order to Robeta by e-mail.

When the work order is submitted to production physically in paper form (production work order submission), the production process begins. The work order is first reviewed in the development department of the company (review of the work order in the development and technology time).

Once the work order is approved in development and technology, production begins to execute the sequence of activities. When the production work

on the assembly is completed, the company administration creates a proforma invoice and forwards it to the distributor, who in turn forwards it to the dealer. After the assembly is completed, the motorhome is physically moved to carry out the final work on the cut, and then to the final quality control, quantitative adequacy of the motorhome and internal and external cleaning.

Before the transport to the market is organized, the payment of the pre-invoice of the motorhome is checked and an invoice is issued to the name of the dealer who ordered the motorhome. Once the motorhome is delivered to the dealer and accepted by the end customer, the existing sales process is completed.

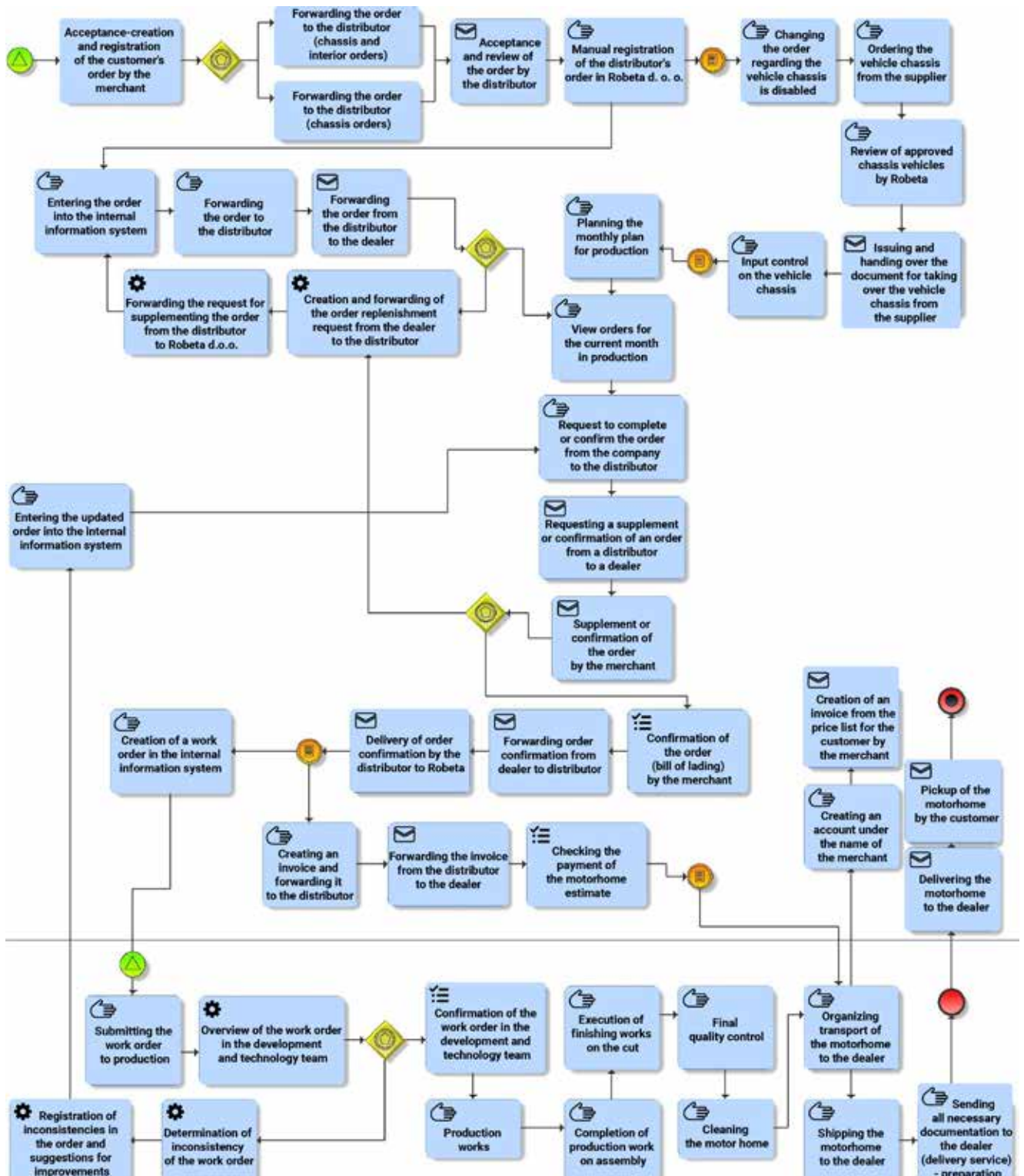


Figure 1: The sales model of existing trading and production

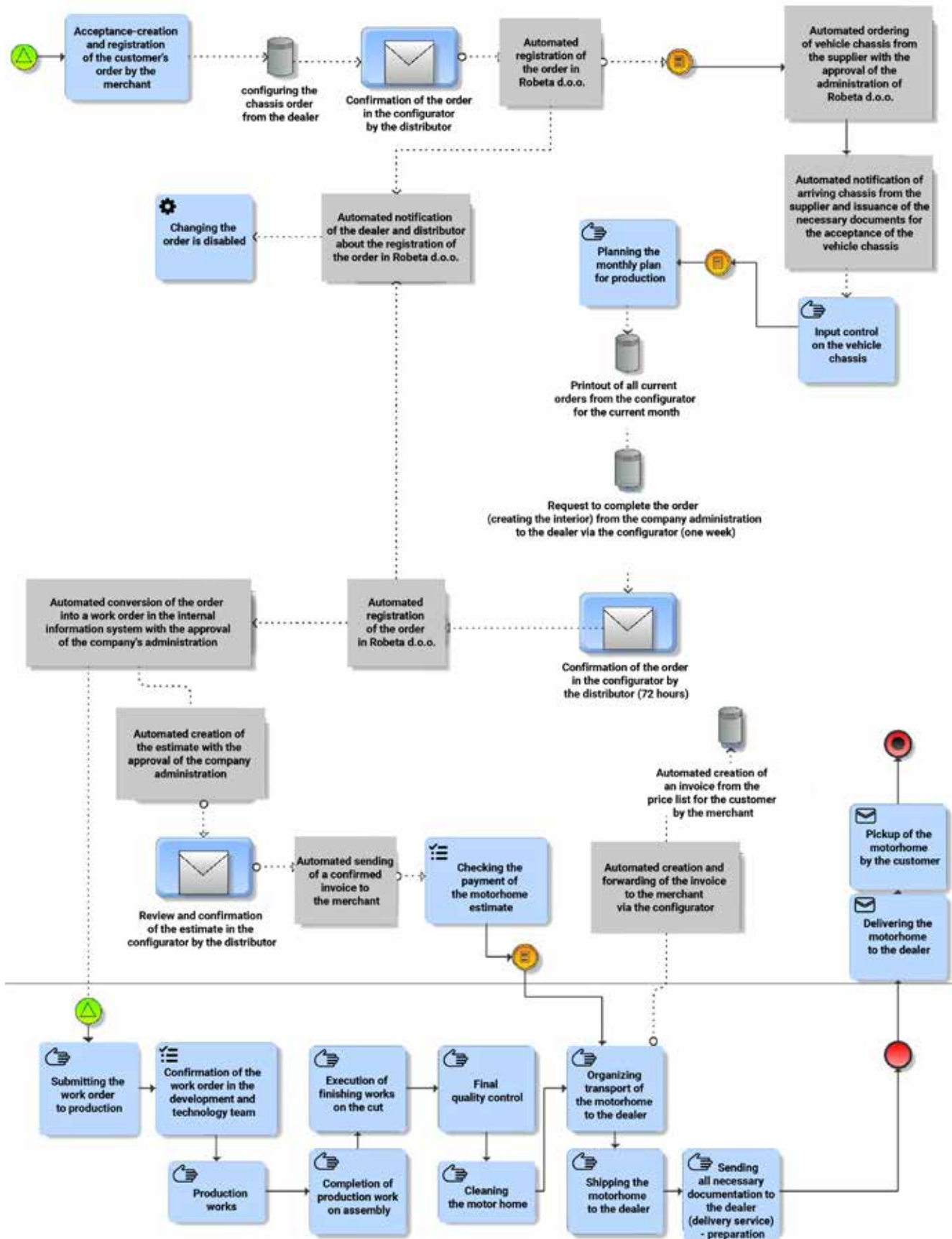


Figure 2 : Model of the improved sales and production process

4.2 Sales and Production Process State Improvement Model (TO-BE)

In the improved model of the sales and production process (*Figure 2*), we introduced a configurator (demo version 1.0), which we developed for the standardized implementation of the order flow and the elimination of discrepancies between the seller and the buyer of Robeta motorhomes. In this way, we have established direct communication between dealers and the motorhome manufacturer. The purpose of the improved process is to get the clean sheet of the order faster and without unnecessary complications due to configuration options of the order, which are incompatible with each other and, as a result, physically unfeasible. The B2B configurator for creating an order for the manufacture of a motorhome guides traders through the entire process of ordering a motorhome with automated exclusion of options based on previously selected options.

With the introduction of the configurator, we have eliminated the following activities, the effects of which are presented in subsection 4.3:

- ▶ activity: Manual recording of the distributor's order in Robeta d. o. o.,
- ▶ activity: Entering the order into the internal information system,
- ▶ activity: Forwarding the order to the distributor,
- ▶ activity: Forwarding the distributor's order to the retailer,
- ▶ activity: Ordering the vehicle chassis from the supplier,
- ▶ activity: Issuing and handing over documents for taking over the vehicle chassis from the supplier,
- ▶ activity: Reviewing orders for the current month in production,
- ▶ activity: Request to complete or confirm the order from the distributor to the dealer,
- ▶ activity: Creation and forwarding of a request for replenishment of an order from a dealer to a distributor,
- ▶ activity: Forwarding the request for supplementing the order from the distributor to the manufacturer,
- ▶ activity: Confirmation of the order (bill of lading) by the merchant,
- ▶ activity: Creating a work order in the internal information system,
- ▶ activity: Overview of the work order in the development and technology team,
- ▶ activity: Determination of inconsistency of the work order,
- ▶ activity: Registration of inconsistencies in the order and suggestions for improvements,
- ▶ activity: Creating an invoice and forwarding the invoice to the distributor,
- ▶ activity: Creating an account for the name of the merchant,
- ▶ activity: Creation of an invoice from the price list for the customer by the merch.

With the help of the dealer's configurator, you can more easily present the customer with the options of serial versions of individual motorhome models (Receiving - creation and registration of the customer's order by the dealer). The configurator remembers the creation of the interior and saves it, but sends only the chassis of the vehicle to the distributor for confirmation via an automated notification (Order confirmation in the configurator by the distributor). When the distributor has confirmed the order of the vehicle chassis from the dealer, the order will be automatically registered in the company's administration and the dealer and distributor will be informed about it (Automated notification of the dealer and distributor about registration of the order in Robeta d. o. o.).

4.3 Presentation of the configurator and effects of improvements

The configurator is in the phase of further development and adaptation to the requirements of dealers and requirements for integration (pairing of data) with the internal information system of the manufacturer Robeta company.

4.3.1 Presentation of the configurator

The configurator as a web application guides the user through the entire process of ordering a motorhome. It does not allow the selection of wrong combinations. It is connected to the bill of materials in the production process, which enables the integration of all necessary data with the internal information system of the motorhome manufacturer. The B2B configurator mutually integrates data in the area of the vehicle platform, data in the area of the interior of the motorhome and all mutually permitted relationships. It enables automated tracking of individual transactions, performs automated notification and exchange of documents between participants in the process, graphically displays possible options for the construction of a motor home and prepares a sales price calculation.

When the dealer finishes ordering the chassis (*Figure 3*), he clicks to confirm his configuration. As can be seen in the sales process (*Figure 1*), the dealer must first place an order for the vehicle chassis. On the entry page of the configurator, select the chassis of a Fiat or Citroën vehicle. Above we see (*Figure 3*) that the dealer has chosen a Citroën vehicle chassis. First, he must determine the size of the vehicle ("L" tells us the length of the car, and "H" the height of the car). You can choose between L2H2, L3H2 and L4H2, in some cases you can also choose the increased car height "H3". The colour of the vehicle is chosen later. In the case of "Metallic" colour, even more options are offered for choosing a colour.

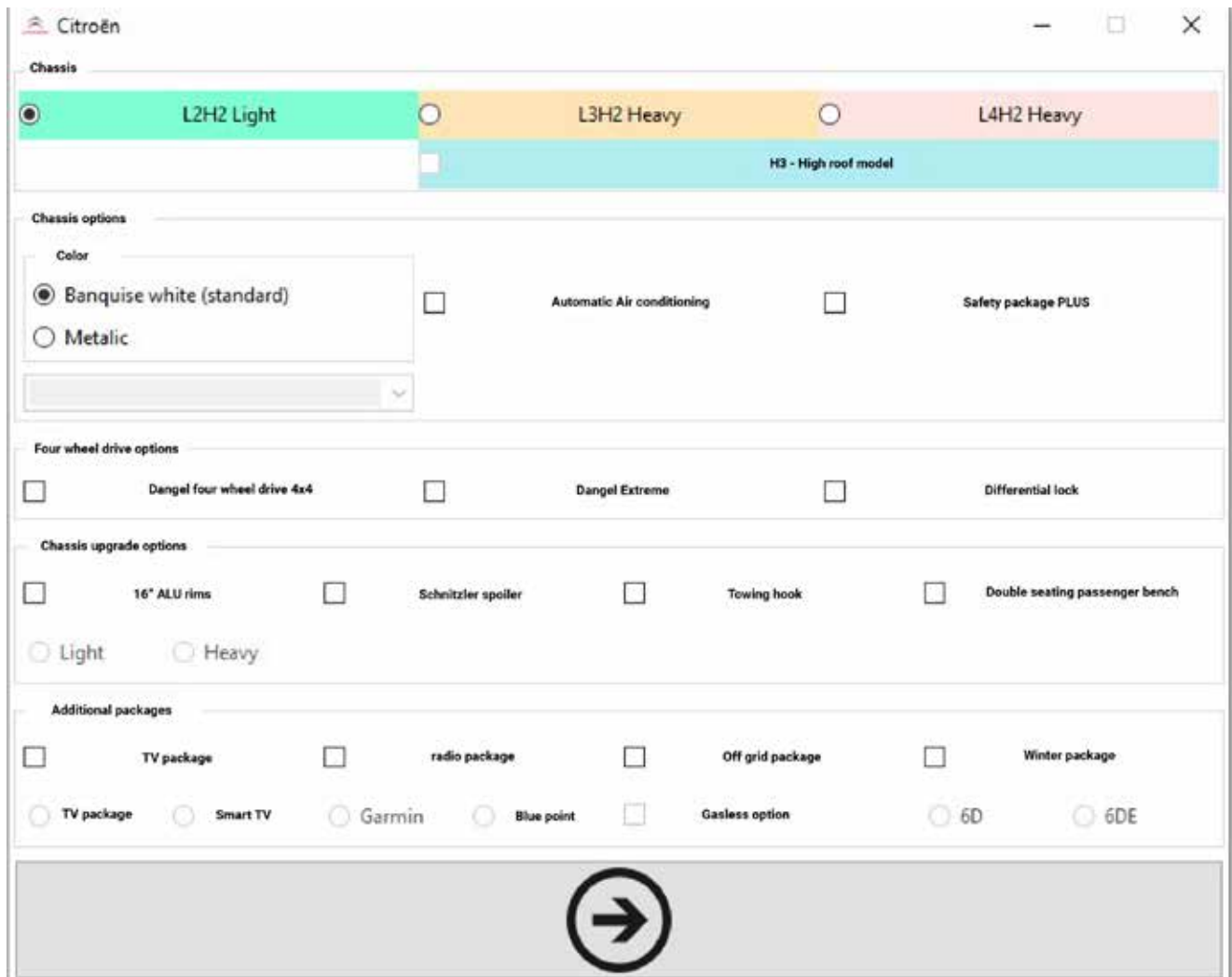


Figure 3 : Configuring the motorhome in the configurator - data entry image

Later (when the monthly production plan at Robeta is prepared), the dealer chooses options for upgrading the vehicle's chassis and additional packages. When he has finished selecting all the options for the vehicle chassis, he continues with the configuration of the vehicle interior. If the dealer has selected the "L2H2" motorhome size when configuring the vehicle chassis, when creating the interior configuration of the motorhome, he is offered the option to configure the versions "Dionysus" and "Ares", since only two configurations on the "L2H2" vehicle chassis allow this.

When the dealer finishes configuring the interior of the camper, the configurator creates a copy of his order in the form of a PDF document, which he sends to the Robeta company. The exchange of documents and information between the dealer and the manufacturer is thus automated.

After creating the order in the configurator, the merchant initiates execution and printing of the order.

4.3.2 Effects of improvements in the sales and production process

The evaluation of the time and costs of work in the existing and improved process and the effects of the improvements are presented in *Table 1*. The calculation of time and costs is based on the activity of ordering in the process of selling and producing one motorhome. We can conclude that by renovating the process in question, we had a significant impact on reducing the time required for its implementation (factor 3), as well as on reducing the costs of implementing this process (factor 3.5). The Robeta company carries out the sales and production process for 33 motorhomes in a month (estimate).

Table 1 : Evaluation of Time and Labor Costs in the Existing and Improved Process

Activities of the Sales and Production Process	The Existing Process AS-IS		The Improved Process TO BE	
	Estimated Time in Minutes	Estimated Costs in EUR	Estimated Time in Minutes	Estimated Costs in EUR
Acceptance-creation and registration of the customer's order by the merchant	180	35,1	120	23,4
Forwarding the order to the distributor (chassis and/or additionally interior orders)	10	1,95	K	0
Acceptance and review of the order by the distributor	30	0	K	0
Manual registration of the distributor's order in Robeta d. o. o.	5	0,975	K	0
Changing the order regarding the vehicle chassis is disabled	-	0	-	0
Ordering the vehicle chassis from the supplier	15	0	K	0
Issuing and handing over the document for taking over the vehicle chassis from the supplier	5	0	K	0
Input control on the vehicle chassis	NA	0	NA	0
Planning the monthly plan for production	65	0	65	0
Entering the order into the internal information system	45	8,775	K	0
Forwarding the order to the distributor	10	1,95	K	0
Forwarding the order from the distributor to the dealer	5	0,975	K	0
Creation and forwarding of the order replenishment request from the dealer to the distributor	30	5,85	K	0
Forwarding the request for supplementing the order from the distributor to Robeto	5	0,975	K	0
Entering the order into the internal information system	20	3,9	K	0
View orders for the current month in production	20	3,9	K	0
Request to complete or confirm the order from the company to the distributor	10	1,95	K	0
Requesting a supplement or confirmation of an order from a distributor to a dealer	15	2,925	K	0
Supplement or confirmation of the order by the merchant	30	5,85	K	0
Confirmation of the order (bill of lading) by the merchant	5	0,975	K	0
Forwarding order confirmation from dealer to distributor	10	1,95	K	0
Delivery of order confirmation by the distributor to Robeta	10	1,95	K	0
Creating an invoice and forwarding it to the distributor	15	2,925	K	0
Forwarding the invoice from the distributor to the dealer	10	1,95	K	0
Creation of a work order in the internal information system	3	0,585	K	0
Submitting the work order to production	10	1,95	10	1,95
Overview of the work order in the development and technology team	10	1,95	10	1,95
Determination of inconsistency of the work order	5	0,975	-	0
Registration of inconsistencies in the order and suggestions for improvements	10	1,95	-	0
Entering the updated order into the internal information system	3	0,585	-	0
Confirmation of the work order in the development and technology team	5	0,975	5	0,975
Production works	NA	0	NA	0
Completion of production work on assembly	NA	0	NA	0
Execution of finishing works on the cut	NA	0	NA	0
Final quality control	NA	0	NA	0

Activities of the Sales and Production Process	The Existing Process AS-IS		The Improved Process TO BE	
	Estimated Time in Minutes	Estimated Costs in EUR	Estimated Time in Minutes	Estimated Costs in EUR
Cleaning the motor home	NA	0	NA	0
Checking the payment of the motorhome estimate	5	0,975	5	0,975
Organizing transport of the motorhome to the dealer	60	11,7	60	11,7
Creating an account under the name of the merchant	3	0,585	K	0
Creation of an invoice from the price list for the customer by the merchant	30	5,85	K	0
Shipping the motorhome to the dealer	60	11,7	60	11,7
Sending all necessary documentation to the dealer (delivery service) - preparation	60	11,7	20	0
Delivering the motorhome to the dealer	W	0	W	0
Pickup of the motorhome by the customer	-	0	-	0
Additional information after re-entering the orders (2x)	256	49,92	-	0
TOTAL	1070	186,23	355	52,65

Legend: Waiting for Robeta d. o. o. (W); Non Applicable - not part of the sales process (NA): Automation using the configurator (K)

5 Conclusion

In the paper, we analysed the existing state of the process of selling and ordering a motorhome (creating a motorhome order) and the production process using the example of the manufacturing company Robeta. We have prepared a model of the improved order creation process. We have developed a configurator that enables the implementation of a standardized order process. By developing changes and additions, we removed the differences between the seller, the buyer and the manufacturer of motorhomes. By introducing improvements and computerizing the sales and production (B2B) process, we radically shortened the necessary time and reduced the costs of order execution in the entire chain of processes (trader - distributor - manufacturer - buyer).

The results of the effects of the improvements show that in the existing sales and production process of the company Robeta, the effective time for the activity of ordering one order of a motorhome is 1070 min. With the improved process model, the implementation of the renovation and the introduction of the configurator, we achieved a reduction in the effective time of business process activity by 66%, which in turn means a reduction in ordering costs by 72% (compared to the existing method of ordering in the sales and production process). We estimate that the investment in the implemented changes will return to the company within 6 months.

Renovation and computerization of the sales and production process also has important long-term positive effects, which cannot be illustrated only by

time and financial savings. The implemented changes also affect the more successful and efficient implementation of other business processes in the company. As a result, new ideas and opportunities for improvement are already emerging. Above all, with the implemented improvements, the company Robeta intensively entered the process of constant progress and innovation. With the renovation, the company significantly contributed to the improvement of the user experience in B2B and B2C relations. At the same time, it also embarked on the path of digital transformation, which includes changes in the understanding of the company's strategy, business processes, information technology, human resources, and the company's organizational culture.

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Prenova prodajnih in proizvodnih procesov v podjetju Robeta

Razširjeni povzetek

Prenova in nadgradnja poslovnih oz. delovnih procesov podjetjem omogoča izdelovanje in dobavljanje individualiziranih produktov ter zmanjševanje časa proizvodnega cikla. Proizvodna podjetja, ki prenovo in nadgradnjo poslovnih procesov uskladijo s potrebami strank, serviserjev in distributerjev, lahko povečajo zadovoljstvo strank in kakovost svojih produktov ter izboljšajo odzivnost trgovcev in hitrost dobav. Z analizo in prenovo proizvodnega procesa lahko povečamo uspešnost in vrednost podjetja, kar pozitivno vpliva tudi na njegove finančne kazalnike. Prenova omogoča pravočasno naročanje materiala in učinkovitejše planiranje proizvodnih kapacitet ter posledično vpliva na zmanjšanje potrebnega časa, stroškov dodatnega dela in materiala.

Tudi v industriji predelave kombijev v avtodome predstavljata izziv konstruiranje in dobava individualiziranih in notranje raznolikih modelov avtodomov glede na trende na različnih trgih, za kar pa je ključnega pomena razvoj skladnega in učinkovitega postopka konfiguriranja naročila. Na primeru podjetja Robeta d. o. o. smo analizirali obstoječe stanje procesa prodaje in naročanja avtodoma (kreiranja naročila končnega izdelka) ter procesa proizvodnje.

Pripravili smo model izboljšane procesa kreiranja naročila. Razvili in uporabili smo konfigurator B2B, ki omogoča standardizirano in avtomatizirano izvajanje naročila ter integracijo vseh potrebnih podatkov med proizvajalcem in trgovcem. S prenovo procesov in razvojem informacijske rešitve smo odstranili razhajanja med notranjimi in zunanji izvajalci proizvodnih in prodajnih procesov. Z uvedbo izboljšav in informatizacijo procesa kreiranja naročila za poslovne uporabnike smo izboljšali odnos med proizvajalcem (podjetje Robeta) in končnim uporabnikom (fizično osebo). S tem smo povečali učinkovitost proizvodnih procesov, izboljšali uporabniško izkušnjo v odnosih B2B in B2C ter zmanjšali stroške prodajnega in proizvodnega procesa v podjetju.

Ključne besede:

prenova in nadgradnja delovnih procesov, digitalizacija, informatizacija, avtomatizacija, konfigurator