

Creating targeted added value

“More is better” is neither true in medicine nor in digitization. Digital solutions have to be applied at very specific problem areas. The new Pexcite software platform provides customers in pharmaceutical production with smart solutions that really make a difference. Harro Höfliger has contributed two important applications to date and entirely changed the way the software team operates.

Hardly any other topic symbolizes speed as much as digitization. Digital transformation is supposed to help accelerate processes and make them more efficient – preferably straightaway. But as the saying goes: if you are in a hurry, go slowly. Simon Schnaitmann, Department Leader Digital Solutions Customer Service at Harro Höfliger, explains: “Such a change requires planning and patience. In the long run, only tailor-made solutions that are industry-specific will provide a measurable added value. The idea of a central platform offering customers just that is, therefore, the right approach.”

Collective expertise
The software platform Pexcite was developed by the Excellence United partner Uhlmann Pac-Systeme. The open platform enables the simple integration of independent and cross-sector solu-

tions and the comprehensive connectivity of multi-vendor machines. This ensures reliable production processes. The idea behind the open system is to pool a multitude of smart solutions from machine manufacturers, suppliers, pharmaceutical companies and other process participants. On the one hand, users benefit from expertise-based digital solutions provided by industry-related partners and, on the other hand, from the convenience and simplicity of a uniform user interface.

Tobias Miunske, Account Manager Digital Solutions at Harro Höfliger, explains the system using the company as an example: “As a machine manufacturer, we know our machines best, as well as the specific requirements and needs of our customers. With this knowledge and our experience in the pharmaceutical environment, we have developed two applications that are now part of the Pexcite platform.”



Janine Kyofsky, Illustration: Bernd Schifferdecker

Multiple product variants? No problem!
One solution that the software specialists at Harro Höfliger have devised is the Production Order Manager. Fabian Elsässer, Director of Engineering and Technical Services at Harro Höfliger, explains: “If there is a high level of product variance on a machine, the pertinent information needs to be manually adjusted for each new production order. This is prone to errors, and errors occurring in production are expensive for our customers. Wherever possible, we try to reduce operator influence with digital tools and interfaces. With the Production Order Manager, we have successfully implemented this task.”

The application enables the central planning of production orders. Manual transfer and input of information via the HMI is no longer required, the use of the correct materials is ensured. The machine operator can flexibly create templates with stored product parameters and transfer them digitally straight to the machine. Once they are stored, orders can be reproduced at any time. The sys-

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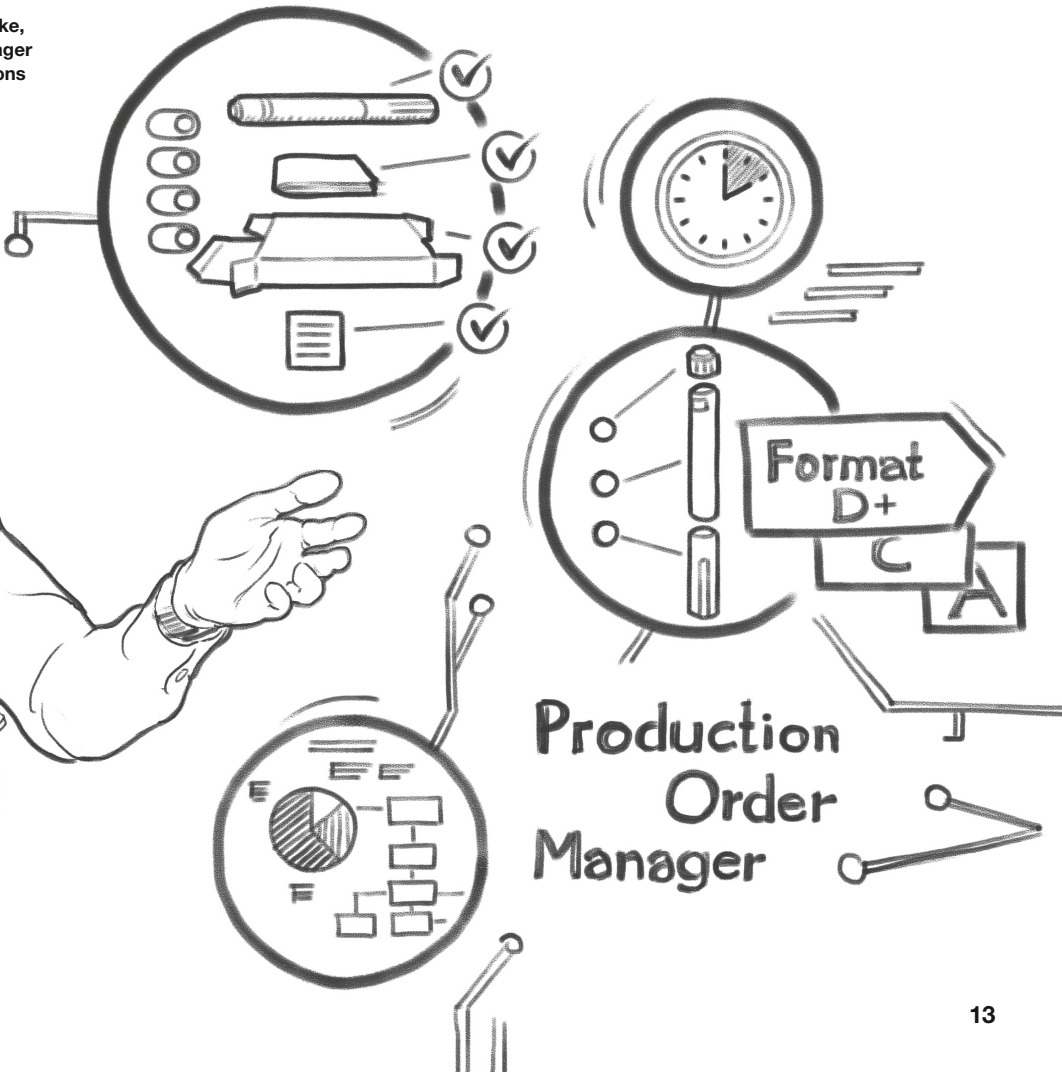
Fabian Elsässer,
Director Engineering and Technical Services at Harro Höfliger

tem detects input errors, which further increases production reliability. Moreover, the operator has an overview of all information that is required to prepare and run production.

Learning about maintenance
The second solution presented by Harro Höfliger with the launch of Pexcite is the Maintenance Manager. The application supports the planning, implementation, archiving and optimization of maintenance procedures, thus helping to avoid machine downtime. Luise Räuchle, Product Manager Digital Solutions at Harro Höfliger, explains: “So far, we have been submitting maintenance plans for our machines on paper, but this is set to change. In the Maintenance Manager they are digitally stored and can be easily administered. Upcoming maintenance tasks and the necessary information are displayed automatically.” Regardless of their location, maintenance staff can access explanations, photos and other information on necessary maintenance steps from various terminals.

Simon Schnaitmann,
Department Leader Digital Solutions

Tobias Miunske,
Account Manager Digital Solutions



Räuchle: “Another advantage of the application is that new information and findings can be added at any time. For example, the operator can adjust maintenance intervals based on experience, thus ensuring that future maintenance steps are only performed when they are necessary. The Maintenance Manager stores this information and learns from historical and currently available data. This is an important step from preventive to predictive maintenance of machines.”

Changing our views and being more flexible

In order to enable the development of products such as the Maintenance Manager and the Production Order Manager,

software development at Harro Höfliger was completely restructured. Fabian Elsässer explains: “Digitization requires agility when developing solutions. Classic project and requirements management costs too much time; developments often come too late or fail to meet the constantly changing market requirements. Since 2019, we have therefore been working with three Scrum teams that can act in a quick, flexible and customer-oriented manner. By involving our customers, we receive direct feedback for our product development.”

What is Scrum?

Scrum is an agile method for software development and project management.

A clear allocation of roles, defined responsibilities and events within a software project ensures a constant increase in product value. At the center of Scrum is the self-organized team: it is an interdisciplinary group that brings together all the relevant skill sets for the implementation of a product idea.

The Scrum Master is responsible for the smooth organization of the development process and eliminates possible obstacles. The person responsible for the product, the so-called Product Owner, collects, defines and prioritizes requirements from customers, the market and from sales. Luise Räuchle is currently in charge of this task at Harro Höfliger. She explains: “I introduce the idea for a

Janine Kyofsky, Illustration: Bernd Schifferdecker

new product to the development team and explain the added value it should provide for customers. The idea, elements, features and functions of the product are defined on so-called story cards.” This results in the Product Backlog, a collection of all requirements, functions and features that the product should have from the user’s point of view.

On your marks, get set, go

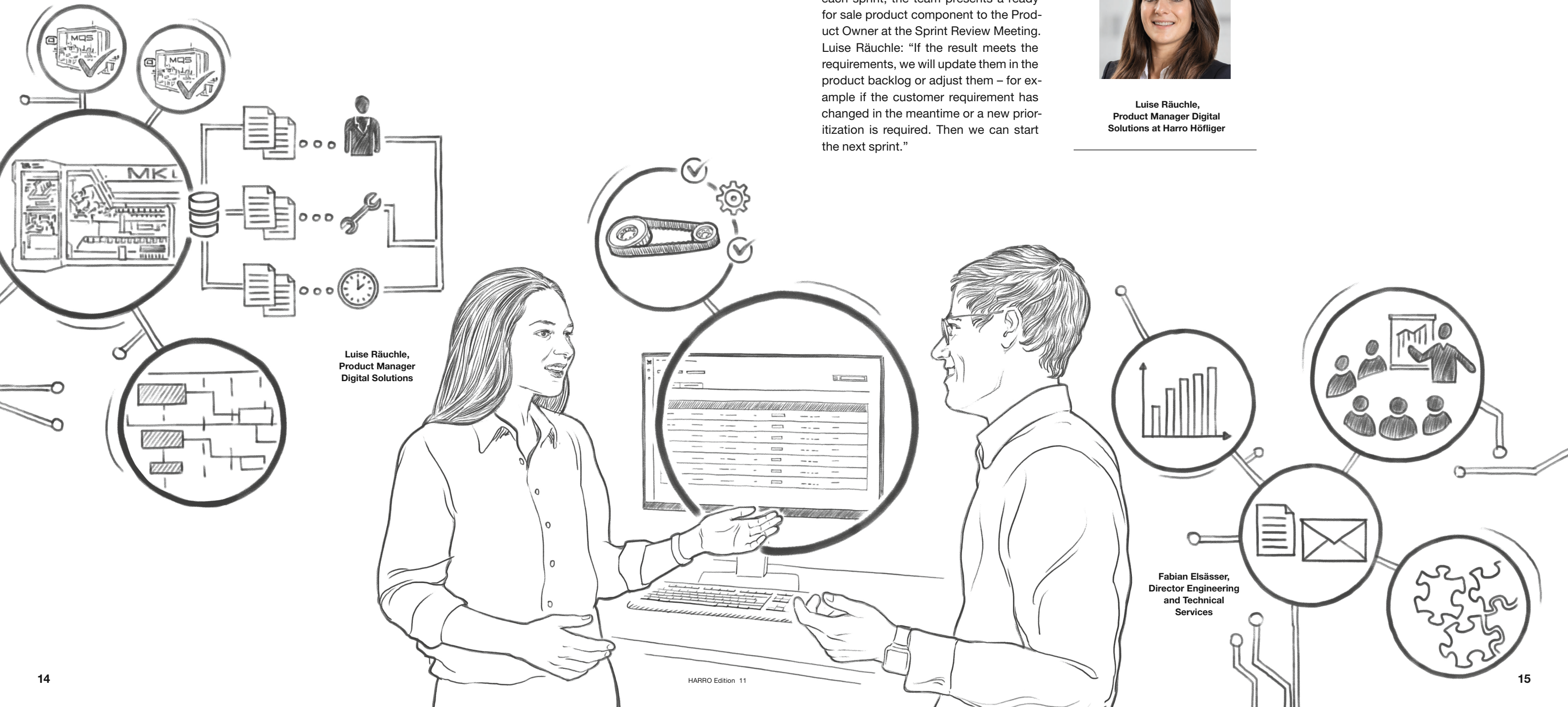
Tobias Miunske continues: “The members of the development team then work in two-week development cycles, so-called sprints. In daily 15-minute meetings the team members discuss with their Scrum Master what they have achieved, where there are problems and how they can be solved”. At the end of each sprint, the team presents a ready for sale product component to the Product Owner at the Sprint Review Meeting. Luise Räuchle: “If the result meets the requirements, we will update them in the product backlog or adjust them – for example if the customer requirement has changed in the meantime or a new prioritization is required. Then we can start the next sprint.”

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Luise Räuchle,
Product Manager Digital
Solutions at Harro Höfliger

Simon Schnaitmann, Department Leader Digital Solutions at Harro Höfliger, summarizes: “An essential aspect of Scrum is that the complete development process of a project must add to the value chain: everything superfluous is omitted. This is also in keeping with our idea of targeted digitization. With Pexcite, where our existing solutions are utilized and many new ones will follow, we are consistently moving forward.” ■



Luise Räuchle,
Product Manager
Digital Solutions

Fabian Elsässer,
Director Engineering
and Technical
Services