



## **ASIAN PAINTS**

### GAINING A 360-DEGREE VIEW OF THE CUSTOMER

“We don’t paint walls, we style them.” That catchy slogan describes a key business initiative launched several years ago by Asian Paints Limited, India’s largest paint company. Instead of simply manufacturing decorative coatings, the company is increasing customer satisfaction and boosting sales by engaging with customers, dealers, and other partners to provide complete home painting solutions. To achieve the necessary 360-degree view of all stakeholders, Asian Paints chose the SAP® Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM) application to integrate customer-facing processes.

**asianpaints**



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# ASIAN PAINTS

## GAINING A 360-DEGREE VIEW OF THE CUSTOMER

### QUICK FACTS

**Industry**

Consumer products

**Revenue**

US\$1.1 billion

**Employees**

5,000 (worldwide)

**Headquarters**

Mumbai, India

**Web Site**

[www.asianpaints.com](http://www.asianpaints.com)

**SAP® Solutions and Services**

SAP® Customer Relationship Management application (functionality for marketing, interaction center, sales, service, and partner channel management), SAP Ramp-Up program

**Implementation Partners**

Mahindra IT Consulting Pvt. Ltd., a unit of Mahindra & Mahindra Group; SAP Consulting

With offices in 19 countries and 27 manufacturing facilities worldwide, Asian Paints Limited serves consumers in more than 65 countries. The company deepens ties with end consumers by providing complete painting services instead of just selling paint. To enhance this end-to-end service model, the company chose the SAP® Customer Relationship Management application.

**Key Challenges**

- Gain visibility of relevant customer data
- Increase opportunities for cross-selling and up-selling
- Reduce time needed to configure customer relationship management (CRM) functionality
- Simplify user interfaces and workflows
- Integrate call center processes
- Provide enhanced support to dealers

**Implementation Best Practices**

- Ensured success with meticulous planning
- Used a phased implementation approach
- Ran training programs for end users
- Worked closely with SAP Labs locations in Singapore, India, and Germany

**Financial and Strategic Benefits**

- Increased efficiency of sales, prospecting, and service processes
- Gained a comprehensive, 360-degree view of partner and customer information
- Motivated and empowered call center personnel
- Created a framework for launching and managing marketing initiatives
- Improved customer and partner satisfaction
- Increased the value of IT systems for the business community

**Why SAP Was Selected**

- Unified view of stakeholder information
- Enhanced user experience
- Comprehensive functionality
- The company's positive experience with SAP® solutions and services
- Close support from SAP Ramp-Up program

**Low Total Cost of Ownership**

- Accelerated implementation via SAP Ramp-Up process
- Decreased training demands on IT staff by 25%
- Reduced time needed to roll out functionality by 20%

**Operational Benefits**

- Integrated telephony and IT systems
- Improved lead gathering and management
- Launched high-quality complaint management system
- Boosted end-user productivity
- Reduced time needed to resolve customer complaints by 35% to 40% versus manual systems

# KEY CHALLENGES

## BUILDING A BETTER SERVICE MODEL

Asian Paints Limited is a highly successful manufacturer of decorative and industrial paints. As the largest paint company in India – and the third largest in Asia – it has achieved enviable growth by building a formidable presence in emerging markets. One of Asian Paints' most successful initiatives has been the development of a service brand – Asian Paints Home Solutions.

With this offering, the company removes much of the anxiety and legwork from the home painting process, giving consumers access to hassle-free professional services, style consultations, color recommendations, and even free samples. The offering combines all the professional services that a customer might need in the course of painting a home. In addition to end consumers, major stakeholders in the Asian Paints Home Solutions offering include interior decorators, contractors, and retailers.

Each of these stakeholders has different needs and different ways of connecting and communicating with Asian Paints. To manage this complex network, the company had been using an early version of the SAP® Customer Relationship Management (SAP CRM) application plus a custom-tailored composite solution built on the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform. The custom-built solution supported delivery tasks associated with painting jobs – including appointment scheduling, ordering, billing, and reporting. The prior release of SAP CRM supported Asian Paints' call center, enabling activity management, lead management, and other customer-oriented processes.

### Putting the Pieces Together

While this blended IT approach worked well, Asian Paints recently concluded that the system needed to be upgraded in order to enhance the business processes supporting the Asian Paints Home Solutions offering. At that time, the company was launching a number of imaginative sales and marketing programs. For example, after obtaining a digital photograph of a customer's home, Asian Paints would provide three different pictures showing how the residence would look if painted according to suggested color schemes.

However, the sales leads and customer data gathered from these and other interactions arrived via many different channels – Web, e-mail, telephone – and were stored in many different places. “We needed CRM software that would allow us to manage multiple engagements with customers and other stakeholders,” says Deepak Bhosale, chief manager of IT at Asian Paints. “We were looking for an application that would help us consolidate all the important information, bring it into one platform, and give us a 360-degree view.”

### Reaching the Limit

One barrier that prevented Asian Paints from developing a more complete view of the customer was the lack of integration between the company's telephony system and its CRM application. The goal: to give each agent immediate access to all relevant customer information as soon as a call comes in to a service center. “We want our agents to be two or three steps ahead of the customer so they can get a head start on resolving a complaint or suggesting a product,” says Deepak Bhosale. “With our old software, this was not possible.”

Asian Paints also wanted to reduce the amount of time needed to configure CRM functionality such as complaint resolution or loyalty program management. In addition, because some end users found the screens and navigation tools somewhat hard to master, Deepak Bhosale and his team were spending too much time training end users – at the expense of more vital IT projects.

### Realizing a New Vision

To overcome these challenges – and to reduce IT-related costs – Asian Paints concluded that it needed an enhanced CRM platform. It wanted an application that was easier to use, easier to configure, and capable of giving business users the information they needed to improve marketing, sales, and service efforts. To bring about this transformation, Asian Paints selected a new release of the SAP Customer Relationship Management application.



## WHY SAP WAS SELECTED

### MIGRATING TO ROBUST, SCALABLE CRM SOFTWARE

As a long-time user of SAP software, Asian Paints was well aware of the advantages of SAP applications and technology. The company regards its highly capable IT organization as a competitive advantage and views SAP as the solution provider of choice – considering non-SAP software only under very specific circumstances. In addition to a prior version of SAP CRM, the company had been using the SAP ERP application to support financials, procurement, supply chain management, and other key processes. Asian Paints also uses SAP NetWeaver to solve integration issues and support custom development – including the composite application the company built to manage sales delivery processes for the Asian Paints Home Solutions service.

With a strong preference for SAP software and the need for a more robust and comprehensive CRM application, Asian Paints began evaluating the latest version of SAP CRM long before the product was available for general release. In a meeting with developers at SAP Labs location in Bangalore, India, Deepak Bhosale and his IT team previewed the improvements being planned and concluded that the new release would have the features and functionality their company needed. “We saw immediately that SAP CRM was capable of giving us a 360-degree view of our stakeholders,” says Deepak Bhosale. “This came across very strongly.”

#### Leveraging New Functionality

Asian Paints also found that the new release of SAP CRM included a number of features and functions that could help the company become more agile and efficient. Powered by the SAP NetWeaver technology platform, SAP business applications like SAP CRM enable companies to take full advantage of prebuilt enterprise services when modifying or enhancing business processes. “We can just pick up enterprise services and use them,” says Deepak Bhosale. “We don’t need to build them ourselves.”

Asian Paints was also impressed by the CRM software’s ability to support real-time offer management, enabling sales

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reps to suggest relevant products or services based on specific customer preferences or experiences. Another plus: tools for business communications management. The Internet protocol-based functionality built into SAP CRM eliminates the need for costly

communications hardware and makes it possible to integrate SAP CRM with telephony systems. This gives sales and service personnel access to computer-based customer information as soon as a telephone call comes in.

#### Improving User Productivity

Finally, Asian Paints felt that the new release of SAP CRM was considerably easier for end users to learn and master. With role-oriented interfaces and improved screen layouts, the software could help increase user productivity and reduce training duties for IT personnel. Equally important, Deepak Bhosale and his team concluded that the newer SAP CRM application would be much easier to configure. “With the new SAP CRM application, it takes us much less time to add or enhance functionality and set it rolling,” says Deepak Bhosale. “This results in much lower IT costs.”



# IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS AND BEST PRACTICES

## PUTTING THE PIECES IN PLACE

Asian Paints used a two-step, phased approach to implement the new release of SAP CRM. First, it ported existing CRM functionality – including service, sales, and partner channel management – to the new release over a three-month time period. Then, after a short pause for evaluation and stabilization, the company configured the application to support additional customer service processes. This interval, too, lasted approximately three months. Mahindra IT Consulting Pvt. Ltd. and SAP Consulting provided close support during each phase of the implementation.

Leveraging the experience gained via numerous implementations of SAP software, the company assembled a team of business and IT experts to help ensure that the application met strategic and technical requirements. With Deepak Bhosale as project manager, the six-person Asian Paints implementation team also included two functional consultants and three technical consultants. Aided by up-front user training, a meticulous implementation plan, and close support from its implementation partners, the company adhered to the project timeline without major delays.

“Currently, we have approximately 25 locations running SAP CRM.

We expect that number to grow by 15% every year for the foreseeable future.”

**Deepak Bhosale**, Chief Manager – IT, Asian Paints Limited

### Providing First-User Advantage

As the first company in India to use the new version of SAP CRM, Asian Paints took full advantage of the SAP Ramp-Up program, which provides direct links to the SAP development organization. With expedited treatment of error messages, early training of key users, ramp-up coaching, and other services, the program helps early adopters reduce the cost, time, and risk of implementation. “We had our share of challenges,” says Deepak Bhosale, “but the SAP support team gave us very high priority, and we got answers almost overnight.”

Aided by a direct pipeline to SAP Labs in Mumbai, Singapore, and Germany, Asian Paints was able to tap into a responsive network of development experts. If a glitch arose within the Asian Paints IT landscape, SAP developers would test and resolve the problem using similar implementations running at their labs. “The SAP developers were particularly proactive with our CRM deployment,” says Deepak Bhosale. “Experts from many different countries worked around the clock to come up with solutions.”

### Setting the Stage for Success

In addition to meticulous planning, strong leadership, and the SAP Ramp-Up program, Asian Paints leveraged a number of best practices to add value to the implementation process. First, end users were encouraged to stay involved throughout the project, which helped mitigate change management issues. Second, Deepak Bhosale and his IT team used the SAP NetWeaver Master Data Management component to cleanse and harmonize master data before transferring it to the new environment. This initiative boosted overall data quality significantly while also paving the way for more accurate reporting. Finally, the IT team conducted detailed integration testing, thoroughly vetting the connections between the new CRM application and Asian Paints’ other SAP and non-SAP software. As a result, Asian Paints was able to successfully implement SAP CRM using a “big bang” approach – with all processes going live at the same time.

# STRONG GOVERNANCE AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

## STAYING ON COURSE

To ensure a smooth implementation and transition, Asian Paints assembled a steering committee to oversee the migration to the newest release of SAP CRM. The committee included representatives from both business and IT organizations, all of whom had a prominent stake in the processes supported by the software. The steering committee met every 45 days to assess progress, review new developments, and help the hands-on project team make key decisions.

As part of its overall project management approach, Asian Paints also circulated a weekly progress report to all stakeholders. This memo included an account of progress made against plans, reasons – and corrective actions – for deviations, risk mitigation plans, and a review of quality issues.

### Training the Trainers

Training played a key role in Asian Paints' project management efforts. One unique approach for educating and motivating end users was a series of contests that created awareness and excitement about the new release. The company also took pains to get super users involved early in the implementation cycle. As a result, these tech-savvy leaders were well equipped to train members of their respective teams.

“From an IT perspective, with SAP CRM we know that development cycles will be shorter, costs will be lower, and the value of what we offer to the business will be higher.”

**Deepak Bhosale**, Chief Manager – IT,  
Asian Paints Limited

### Architecture

SAP® applications	SAP CRM
Number of users	200
Number of locations	25
Number of SAP instances	1
Database	Oracle
Operating system	Red Hat Enterprise Linux
Hardware	HCL, Dell, HP laptops

Interactive tutorials, supplied by SAP, also helped users get up to speed quickly with the new screens and workflows. Finally, Asian Paints established an evaluation process – not unlike a proficiency exam – to ensure that all users achieved a minimum level of proficiency.

# BUSINESS PROCESS TRANSFORMATION AND VALUE REALIZED

## BUILDING STRONGER, DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

With SAP CRM, Asian Paints now has the tools it needs to improve the quality of all interactions between the company and its many stakeholders. The software serves as a powerful, scalable platform that allows business users to capture, consolidate, and present relevant information in a format that meets their unique needs.

### Making Each Interaction Count

After implementing the latest release of SAP CRM, Asian Paints was able to make substantial improvements in several key areas. Perhaps the most important benefit was a new-found ability to improve the quality of customer-oriented activities. According to Deepak Bhosale, the phrase “customer relationship” has taken on a new meaning. “We are now able to have a quality conversation with any given customer,” he says. “We don’t have to go into two or three different systems in order to fashion a response.”

Despite the fact that Asian Paints serves millions of customers, SAP CRM enables the company to maintain a personalized relationship with each of them. Using the software, customer service personnel know exactly why a customer is calling as soon as a call comes in to a service facility. If a complaint needs to be handled, staffers can see what progress has been made toward resolution. The software also displays a list of past interactions, giving call center personnel an accurate picture of each customer’s habits, preferences, and history. “Having all the customer information in one place is very important,” says Deepak Bhosale. “It makes our customers aware that we value their business and understand their issues.”

### Adding Functionality to Build Stronger Ties

After porting existing functionality to the new release of SAP CRM, Asian Paints turned its focus to configuring the application to support improved complaint management processes. The goal: to track progress from the time of an initial complaint until the problem has been resolved. As part of this effort, the company integrated the software with Asian Paints’ e-mail and mobile-phone text-messaging gateways, boosting the overall responsiveness and efficiency of complaint-handling activities. In addition to providing better visibility, the software also helps Asian Paints take the steps needed to fix problems, routing exceptions to appropriate manufacturing, technology, or marketing teams.

“Asian Paints has very aggressive timelines for closing complaints,” says Deepak Bhosale. “SAP CRM allows us to route complaints efficiently until they get resolved.”

The software also helps Asian Paints manage service-level agreements (SLAs) with the dealers who play such an important role in the company’s success. The company provides tinting machines for approximately 12,000 of these channel partners, maintaining the equipment in accordance with service-level commitments. SAP CRM allows Asian Paints to capture complaints related to the machines and route them up an escalation matrix. Even though the equipment is highly complex – and must be serviced by multiple vendors – the CRM application helps Asian Paints coordinate relevant stakeholders and ensure adherence to service guidelines.

### Leveraging IT Resources

Asian Paints’ IT organization is also realizing substantial benefits with the new SAP CRM application. Working closely with business leaders, the company’s IT experts now find it considerably easier to map processes and modify workflows. Previously, configuring CRM software to support a complex business scenario such as lead management – which depends on an intricate matrix of steps and outcomes – might have taken up to four months. Now, that interval can be reduced by as much as 20%, depending on the complexity of the initiative.

IT personnel are also spending much less time training end users, due to the simplified interfaces and more intuitive functionality of the new CRM release. “Until recently, we had to call people into our office for two days of training before letting them go back and interact with customers,” says Deepak Bhosale. “Now we handle this training in a matter of hours.” Ease of use is also helping to increase productivity and reduce training time for members of Asian Paints’ diverse partner universe. This ecosystem includes a vast array of contractors, dealers, designers, and many other partners – few of whom are comfortable with complex screens and menus.

With less time spent on training and configuration projects, Deepak Bhosale and his IT team are able to focus on promising activities that will yield substantial dividends for Asian Paints. “We can now take on many more initiatives that will increase the quality and value of our overall contribution to the business.”



Process Area	Challenges	Results after SAP® Software	KPI Impact
Customer complaint handling	Inability to easily track complaint status	Transparent view of complaint status for all stakeholders	Faster complaint resolution (by 35% to 50%) in comparison to manual systems
	Limited scalability, hindering efforts to roll out complaint-handling processes regionally	Scalable complaint-handling processes	Ability to disseminate complaint status information to stakeholders 3 times faster
	Lack of built-in business intelligence functionality	Integrated analytics	Greater process efficiency
Dealer complaint handling	Inability to manage multiple vendor relationships	Automatic routing of complaints to appropriate vendor without manual intervention	Improved complaint resolution
	No easy way to monitor service-level agreements (SLAs)	Visible and accessible SLA data	Increase in dealer loyalty and satisfaction
	Inability to manage dealer asset inventory efficiently	Ability to track asset inventory Support for all 10,000 dealers, due to scalable functionality	Better adherence to SLA guidelines Better maintenance of dealer equipment
Software deployment	Long turnaround times (up to 3 to 4 months needed to configure functionality)	Less time spent on configurations	Shorter development cycles (by 20%)
	Too much time needed to train end users	Faster deployments; easy integration with other applications	Reduced IT costs
		Simple, more intuitive user interfaces	Increase in end-user productivity and motivation More time for IT personnel to spend on added-value tasks
Customer experience	Cumbersome sales and service processes, affecting customer satisfaction	Visibility of customer data, improving interactions	Greater customer satisfaction
		Ability to resolve customer issues more rapidly, due to fast-loading user interfaces	Improved response to up-sell and cross-sell offerings
		Improved call center responsiveness and efficiency	Increase in call center productivity (by 20% to 30%) with better user interface

# FUTURE ROAD MAP

## MANAGING ALL CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS



Asian Paints views the latest release of SAP CRM as a platform that will ultimately support all customer activities and interactions, including those that

“Even when customers engage with us via multiple channels and request multiple services, SAP CRM allows us to see them as a single entity. That helps us develop strategies that are personalized, targeted, and successful.”

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are currently managed with the custom-built solution. As it works toward this goal, the company is confident that SAP CRM will help Asian Paints improve operational efficiencies and sharpen its strategic edge. “Even when customers engage with us via multiple channels and request multiple services,

SAP CRM allows us to see them as a single entity,” says Deepak Bhosale. “That helps us develop strategies that are personalized, targeted, and successful.”

As part of the drive to create innovative strategies using the SAP Customer Relationship Management application, Asian Paints is working on the following initiatives:

- **Loyalty management** – Asian Paints works closely with dealers, contractors, painters, interior designers, and architects to promote its services and offerings. Currently, the company intends to use the new release of SAP CRM to manage the diverse loyalty programs that reward and motivate these partners.
- **Real-time offer management** – At any given time, Asian Paints runs a multitude of special offerings and promotions. To help agents and dealers make informed decisions about which product or service to offer, the

company intends to deploy an offer-management tool that makes recommendations based on relevant customer information. The tool, which uses optimization analytics, will support up-sell and cross-sell activities.

- **Dealer Internet sales** – To boost sales for its 25,000 dealers, Asian Paints is currently building a portal that will help these channel partners manage sales, marketing, ordering, and fulfillment processes.

# LESSONS LEARNED

## ENSURING LONG-TERM GROWTH

With the implementation of SAP CRM, Asian Paints has honed processes, strengthened ties with business partners, and achieved new levels of customer satisfaction. Building on early successes, the company intends to use the software as a platform for extending its brand and ensuring long-term growth. The following table summarizes key lessons learned from this project.

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Create a clear customer relationship management vision and strategy

- Understanding project objectives and tactics helps all team members work toward a common goal.
- A well-designed road map allows IT and business personnel to model more effective processes.

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Understand processes first, technology second

- Maintaining a focus on customer-facing processes, rather than software, keeps customers at the center of the equation.
- A process-driven approach helps team members understand synergies and interdependencies.
- A review of best practices-based functionality offered within the SAP Customer Relationship Management application can lead to optimized configuration.

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Pay close attention to data migration issues

- An analysis of data structures of both the former and new release helps ensure a smooth transition.
- A data migration strategy must be a part of a company's overall vision and road map.

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