

Manufacturing case study

Saint-Gobain Abrasives boosts sales process with Salesforce

Single CRM platform and standardized sales processes for 25 EMEA countries will support revenue growth and enable deals to be closed faster.

The challenge

Saint-Gobain Abrasives is the world's leading manufacturer of abrasives for shaping and surface-finishing a wide range of materials. The company has a proven history of product quality and investment in R&D and engineering and wanted its customer-facing EMEA teams to have equally high-quality tools to support business development and sales growth.

Growth through acquisition had left Saint-Gobain Abrasives without a standard CRM system in EMEA. For critical activities like new business opportunity management, visit reports and sample orders, it relied on a patchwork of in-country processes and systems—some of them little more than spreadsheets.

A major IT and change management program

While the company generates a significant amount of business from existing clients, it had a major opportunity to engage and convert net-new prospects by turning a sales culture into a lead culture. Its North American operation had standardized Salesforce with great success—a result Saint-Gobain Abrasives wanted to replicate in EMEA. But this would mean a custom Salesforce implementation for 25 countries, involving new sales processes as well as new software. Saint-Gobain Abrasives needed an experienced partner to manage this major change program.

The approach

After a competitive tender, Saint-Gobain Abrasives chose Cognizant as its strategic partner for the project, thanks in part to Cognizant's track record of successfully delivering similar projects for Saint-Gobain Abrasives Australia & New Zealand.

The project allowed for a timeframe of just 12 months to get Salesforce live in 25 countries, across multiple languages and cultures. Working closely with Saint-Gobain Abrasives EMEA CRM Manager Thomas Roulet and IT/IS Director Sébastien Royon, Cognizant kicked off a three-phase program of change management and technical solution delivery.



At a glance

Industry

Manufacturing

Location

France

Challenge

Get 25 countries live on Salesforce Sales Cloud in a tight 12-month timeframe

Success Highlights

- Technical go-live achieved for 25 countries in just 12 months
- Efficient, standardized processes for opportunity management and quoting
- 360-degree view of all opportunities across EMEA

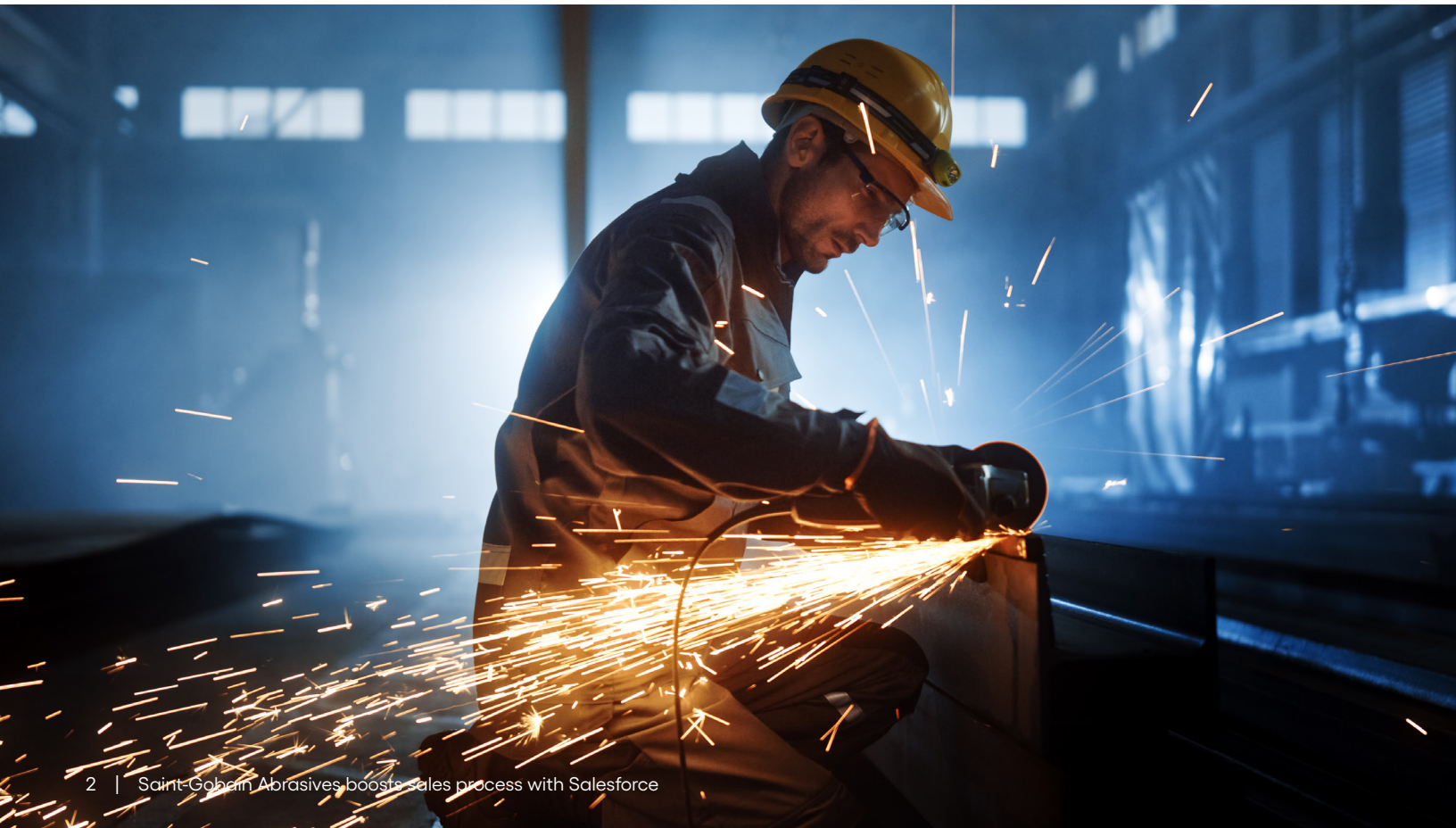
Three steps to successful delivery

Phase 1 involved understanding current processes, gathering requirements and defining standardized processes. Key elements included:

- **Discovery:** To understand project scope and requirements
- **Identification of country champions:** Experienced sales, customer service and marketing professionals and key users from each country were recruited as Salesforce evangelists for their teams
- **Core model analysis:** Countries were grouped into core and non-core segments based on business volume and maturity of their existing CRM processes and tools
- **Process definition:** Standardized processes were defined based on the needs of the core group of countries—particularly around customer service and marketing, ensuring a single “Customer 360” mindset across all customer-facing roles
- **Fit gap analysis:** Non-core countries were fully involved in the process definition for core countries, and their additional requirements taken on board as needed

Phase 2 comprised design and development of the customized Salesforce solution, including ongoing change management to ensure user buy-in and adoption. Key elements in this phase were:

- **Agile methodology** involving six-week sprints with “show and tell” presentations and user feedback sessions after each sprint
- **Custom screens** developed for new prospect creation, visit reports and sample ordering, in line with company-specific processes was easy and quick
- **Integrations** to SAP as the core system of record, using webMethods and Talend as the customer’s in-house choice of middleware
- **Sandbox environment** to allow country champions and key users to experiment with the solution
- **Continuous communications** with country managers, country champions and central IT to understand issues and ensure buy-in
- **Comprehensive training** of country champions and key users in a train-the-trainer model, including creation of sales materials and around 70 hours of hands-on training across four trainer groups



Phase 3 involved data migration, UAT and deployment to production. Key elements included:

- **Data migration:** Working with central IT to migrate relevant data into Salesforce
- **UAT:** A 10-week window for users to test the system and report any defects, followed by remediation by the Cognizant team
- **Staggered release:** Starting with France and rolling out to key users first and the whole country user community a week later
- **Onboarding of external agents:** 35 external sales agents onboarded to the system through Salesforce Experience Cloud

Business outcomes

In just 12 months, Cognizant completed a complex business and IT change project for Saint-Gobain Abrasives, successfully delivering a customized implementation of Salesforce Sales Cloud to 650 trained sales users across 25 EMEA countries, including 35 external agents.

Transforming from a sales culture to a lead culture

The new solution is projected to transform sales effectiveness for this venerable French manufacturing firm, enabling it to:

- **Transform sales effectiveness** in 25 EMEA countries, with a single, integrated CRM platform
- **Standardize sales processes** across 615 internal sales professionals and 35 external sales agents
- **Deliver quotes faster and more accurately** to prospective customers, drawing product pricing data directly from SAP
- **Streamline the sample ordering process**, where customers trial products before buying, using Cognizant-built custom functionality in Sales Cloud
- **Accelerate lead-to-cash cycles** by making new business opportunities easier to track and manage in-country and across the region
- **Accelerate business development**, to identify and capitalize on untapped demand from net-new prospects

- **Improve customer relationships** by giving sales directors and relationship managers a 360-degree view of current opportunities prior to each customer meeting

Following a successful go-live, Saint-Gobain Abrasives has, for the first time, a standardized CRM system and standardized processes to track and manage new business opportunities. The new Salesforce platform has turned the organization's sales culture into a data-driven lead culture, enabling it to capitalize more fully on net-new revenue opportunities across EMEA

About Saint-Gobain Abrasives

Saint-Gobain Abrasives is the world's leading manufacturer of abrasives, offering powerful, precise and user-friendly solutions enabling customers to shape and surface-finish all types of materials even in the most complex and challenging applications across a diverse range of markets. For more information visit www.saint-gobain-abrasives.com

“We wanted a superior CRM solution with a Customer 360 view that would allow us to accelerate business development while improving the customer experience for new and existing customers. Cognizant provided valuable perspectives and designed a collaborative project structure involving IT representatives, country champions and key users from sales, service and marketing teams across EMEA. The result was a successful on-time delivery of a challenging project.”

Thomas Roulet, EMEA CRM Manager, Saint-Gobain Abrasives



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