



MTM Software Center Develops IT Solutions on Demand

Interview with Manfred Laier, Director, Business Unit Software

The ability to integrate software solutions is one of the most important preconditions for the digital networking of production and therefore for the development of Industry 4.0. The MTM Software Center is bringing a product range on to the market in the shape of the new TiCon generation, TiCon4 for Windows, and it meets these requirements. MTMaktuell spoke to Manfred Laier, Head of the Software Center, about the current range of products and new plans.

Mr. Laier, TiCon4 is a milestone in the development capability of the MTM Software Center. What makes the new product line so special?

The loose connection between the modular program components is the clear benefit. This opens up completely new opportunities for corporations to integrate MTM analyses and further TiCon functions in other software solutions or ERP systems.

TiCon4 is currently available in the Base version. What kind of enhancements are you planning?

The main focus this year will be on enhancing the product with the process designer and cycle modules. Both of them are stand-alone solutions. So you don't actually need TiCon4 Base in order to integrate the modules in an existing ERP system. However, you then don't have the opportunity of performing an MTM analysis. And an MTM analysis is the only way of providing an exact basis for processes and times. By the way: about 75 percent of German companies are still estimating their target times. So there's plenty of scope to grow.

How would you describe the development philosophy at the Software Center?

We develop our products and services on demand. Firstly, we support the MTM consultancy work. That's to say, we're making available professional software solutions to companies, which introduce MTM, and also accompanying the onward development of MTM towards Industry 4.0. One of the major focuses in MTM consultancy work is, for example, cooperation between human beings and machines. Our contribution here involves developing a multiple station work module based on TiCon4 to synchronize several production islands with each other. We're also naturally gearing our development work to the needs of our customers.

What exactly does that mean?

Let's take the example of integrating time studies according to REFA in TiCon4. At first sight, it sounds unusual, but some customers have expressed interest in this. And that's quite understandable. There are corporations – including those that have already introduced MTM – where the use of more highly aggregated building block systems is not worthwhile, but they still need times and therefore use time studies in line with REFA. So

our focus at the MTM Software Center is on all-round planning for production, including the cycles, process design work, multiple station work and time studies.

How do you intend to proceed with TiCon for SAP?

We have quite a lot of plans in the SAP field. For example, we want to integrate time studies in SAP or link the work plan to our cycle module, including planning work for alternative products and integrating parts lists. This is of great interest for customers in the engineering or vehicle construction sectors – e.g. forklift trucks. Another development area with TiCon for SAP is the automatic preparation of work documents.

The software solutions from SAP are constantly being developed – can TiCon for SAP keep up with the pace?

We'll tackle the new SAP UI5 user interface this year. SAP UI5 is a framework based on HTML5 and ensures responsiveness and therefore the ability to use the software solution on any terminal devices – that means that we're working with the latest development stage at SAP.

We've talked a great deal about TiCon4. How are you dealing with the preceding version, TiCon3?

TiCon3 is a permanent element in the product portfolio and will be sold alongside TiCon4 during the next few years. TiCon3 will be serviced for the next ten years and development work on it will continue in line with individual customer requirements. Our customers can therefore choose between three product lines at the moment: TiCon3, TiCon4 and TiCon for SAP. If anybody isn't certain which one is the right solution for their company, we're very happy to provide advice.