



CUSTOMER STORY

Hupac Group modernizes legacy transport management solution with LANS A

cutting development time by 40% and
reducing maintenance costs by 50%



BACKGROUND

Modernization, **simplified**

Hupac Group, Europe's leading intermodal network operator, launched a massive modernization project in 2018. The group had outgrown its 30-year-old legacy IT system and needed a flexible, low-code environment that could support a newly developed platform, while also supporting the parts of the legacy system it planned to keep.

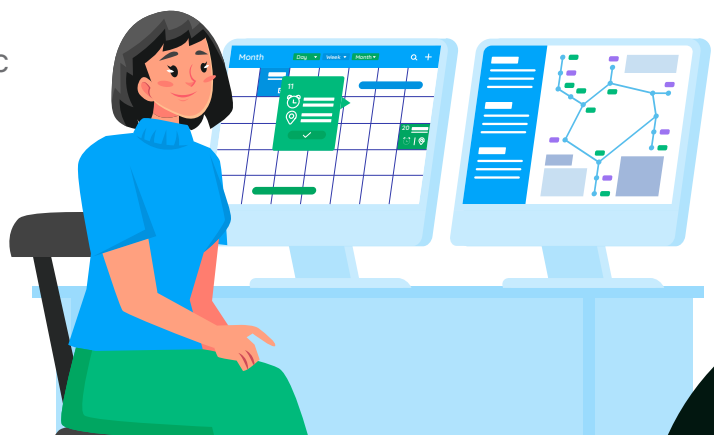
First, the company used Visual LANSA and LANSA Integrator to build two new modules: a modern booking system and a train monitoring system, and it gave the legacy platform a new look using LANSA aXes. The group was able to reduce maintenance costs by 50% and development time by 30-40%. Within three years, Hupac Group plans to complete 90% of the total project, including a rollout to all 30 companies in the Hupac Group.

"We are convinced we've chosen the best solution for us. We count on LANSA for new releases that follow the newest technology trends and increase the response time of our application. We have great appreciation for our tool."

ABOUT THE CLIENT



Based in Switzerland, Hupac Group (www.hupac.com) is the largest group in Europe for rail freight transport (combined road-rail transport). It consists of 30 companies with 700 full-time employees running 150 trains a day throughout Europe and China. Hupac Group generates 800 million Euros in revenue every year.



CHALLENGE

Building on a **strong legacy**

Hupac Group has a long history of growth stretching back to 1967. Based in Chiasso, South Switzerland, the group includes 30 different companies and runs approximately 150 trains throughout Europe and China every day.

In the 1990s, Hupac Group created GOAL, an internal digital tool designed to manage and maintain 8000 railcars, rail terminal processes, and train monitoring systems. GOAL was built using a cross-platform development tool called COOL:2E (ex-Synon). But over the next 20 years, Hupac Group outgrew this legacy environment. 20 times larger than it was in the 1990s, the group needed a modern, scalable platform to match.

“Operationally, it was perfect, with all our processes customized by us and managed internally,” says Aldo Croci, Director of Information Technology at Hupac Group. “But we decided to build applications based on new technology, devices, and processes because when a tool is 20 or 30 years old, not all solutions are as perfect as they could be.”

The group decided to begin a long-term modernization project, prioritizing new booking and real time train monitoring systems. Phase by phase, the group would develop the various components of a new tool called WOLF, while still relying on some of the old components from GOAL.



“First, however, Hupac Group needed a software development tool that could support the group’s existing RPG environment for GOAL, as well as a larger-scale development environment for WOLF. With a small IT team of only six developers, it was also important for Hupac Group to be able to use a consistent programming language across the platform.”

“Some parts of the application are for the clients, other parts are for our companies,” says Croci. “And our application needed to be able to integrate with a variety of mobile devices that people might use in the train loading area—which means it also needed to be responsive.”

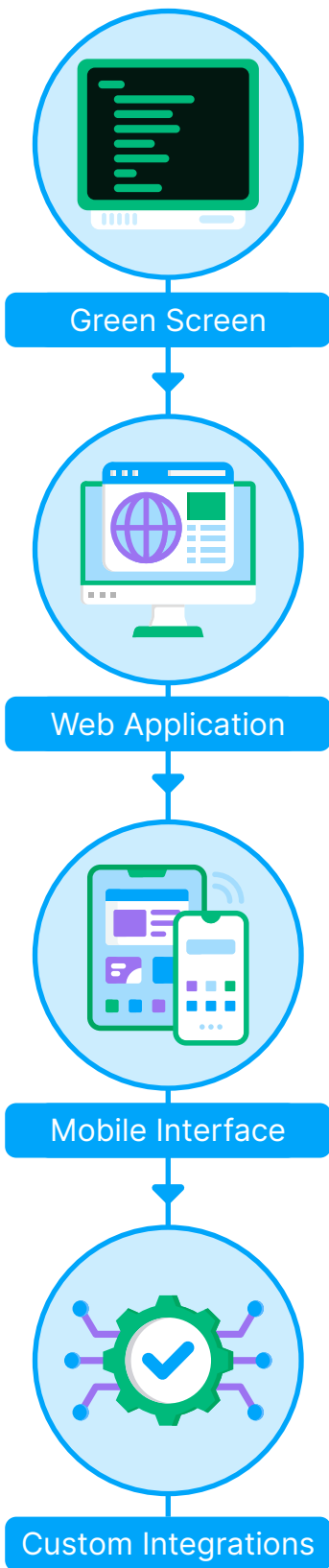
With companies distributed across two continents and employees working everywhere from offices to loading docks, it was also important to find a tool that could support development for a variety of devices.

SOLUTION

A flexible development partner

After exploring its options, Hupac Group decided to move forward with Visual LANSA, a low-code platform for enterprise application development that provides consistency when developing for web-based, mobile, and desktop applications. It also purchased aXes to modernize the look and feel of its legacy components, and LANSA Integrator, a type of middleware that allows for flexible integration with third-party libraries, a fundamental requirement in HUPAC’s EDI projects.

“Integrator was one of the reasons we decided to develop within a LANSA environment – we had a good experience with Integrator five or six years earlier,” says Croci. “We analyzed and compared LANSA’s features with the competition, and decided to go with that.”



As planned, Hupac Group built a new web portal that allows customers to book their transport, displaying timetables for train departures and arrivals in various countries – a critical initiative since the group manages approximately 1 million bookings a year.

Hupac Group also built a real time train monitoring system that provides three lenses of visibility, depending on whether the user is an IT administrator, a loading dock employee, or a customer. This system uses a combination of GPS, EDI, and sensors to monitor a container’s logistics journey, as well as the full maintenance process for Hupac Group’s wagon fleet.

“The customer can only see information related to their transport,” says Croci. “The employees in the loading area can only see information regarding the containers being loaded and discharged in their area. And we can get all the information across the entire transportation network.”

Now that Hupac Group has completed these two WOLF modules, it’s been able to sunset some GOAL components. “This approach has been really fantastic, especially with LANSA’s ability to support Java.”

RESULTS

Centralized control, reduced overhead

Although there are still modules to be developed, Hupac Group is already benefiting from the modernization initiative. Not only has the group reduced maintenance costs by 50%, it's also decreased development time by 40%. This made it possible for Hupac Group to reassign 30% of its IT team to other projects.

"We are the leader in combined transport in Europe, and with modern and open applications like Wolf developed by LANSA, we are also the leader in IT in our sector," says Croci. "We are continuously expanding our group, and this requires us to have fast and modern software development tools that will allow us to respond quickly to our customers."

Hupac Group's member companies appreciate Wolf too. "Centralized control of this software is very important to the big companies that invest in new technologies. This is valuable to them."



LOOKING AHEAD

A two-way partnership

Within the next three years, the project will be 90% complete, with WOLF rolled out to all companies in all countries. "There are new rules, new companies, new business markets, and it's a never-ending project, but we have now migrated the largest part of the old system to a new system and now every new process is developed in Wolf, with some functionality remaining in GOAL," says Croci.

Now, Hupac is advocating for LANSA to be taught in local technical schools. If the schools adopt this training, it would be a win-win situation for LANSA and Hupac Group. With more students trained in LANSA, Hupac Group would have a broader pool of talent to choose from.

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ABOUT US

LANSA offers professional low-code tools that accelerate the development and modernization of mission-critical applications. It simplifies digital transformation, particularly for IBM i users, aiding in UI/UX improvements, functional upgrades, mobile adoption, cross-platform deployment, integrations, analytics, automation, and more.



With over 35 years of industry experience, LANSA is a proven partner in efficiently future-proofing investments and ensuring business agility for small to large enterprises worldwide.

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