

## "Knowledge is worth securing"

### **Mr Barg, until recently you were a knowledge provider at AIRBUS. What is that exactly?**

At Airbus, like in many other companies, a lot of older employees are going into retirement. If their knowledge isn't successfully passed on to a successor, expertise acquired over years of work would be lost. Before I retired then, my task was to transfer all my knowledge to my successor.

### **What did you pass on?**

I worked in Airbus's IT department in Hamburg. There I worked as systems developer and I took care of the technical processes which needed to operate in the background. For instance, material demand planning: How does the system show that material needs to be ordered for production and when that order needs to be placed? How does the system indicate that all material required for production is available or, if not, how does it show what is missing?



### **Questions asked of Hans-Joachim Barg,**

former systems developer in the Airbus's IT department in Hamburg. The 59-year-old passed on his knowledge to his successor.

### **How did the knowledge transfer take place?**

The knowledge transfer process ran over a period of approximately five months and was organised by our HR Knowledge Management unit in collaboration with Pumacy Technologies AG. This began with a meeting with my boss, my successor and a representative from Pumacy in which knowledge transfer goals were defined. Roughly, this meant that we agreed the fields into which my successor should be introduced. Once per month, I had a meeting with Pumacy and we agreed which sub-goals had been attained.

### **Did your successor accompany you at work?**

In order to show my successor everything and to explain it, we had regular weekly meetings. We generally met in my office where I went through my various projects and my daily routine and we also jointly attended meetings.

### **What happened with your computer data?**

We looked at documents which I had compiled over the years and which up to now were only stored on my work computer. We then transferred these to a central system. Going through my contact data base was especially important. This way, my successor could immediately see who was to be contacted and for what.

### **How was the collaboration with your successor for you?**

For me, the entire process was a pleasant one. I could act in familiar surroundings. I also got to work with the person who was later to assume my responsibilities. Apart from that, we already knew each other as my successor had already worked for Airbus for around ten years.

### **Why is knowledge transfer worthwhile?**

If you pass on your knowledge in an orderly way, then you can be quite sure in the end that you've done everything you can to secure expertise. The structured approach that we used was particularly useful in helping to maintain a good overview of the process. This also included use of a knowledge transfer expert from Pumacy who asks and determines just how far along you are with the knowledge transfer process.

### **Did you learn something from the process?**

By going through all my working tasks in such a conscious way, I realised exactly what I have achieved - many things operate on a subconscious level at work. Some of my tasks, for instance, I could have delegated to other colleagues much earlier so as to have more time for other more important tasks. Sometimes you don't realise that you've busied yourself with a detailed task for too long.