

Success story in renewable energy

# How BayWa r.e. Solar Trade and 4flow enabled sustainable growth in renewables with a fast and agile digital supply chain transformation



## Customer: BayWa r.e. Solar Trade

- > One of the world's leading distributors of photovoltaic components
- > Network of over of over 20 legal entities with more than 1,400 employees worldwide

## Project scope:

Process design and implementation of S&OP processes, setup and implementation of Kinaxis Maestro®

# A new end-to-end planning process

With a network of over 20 locations worldwide, more than 1,400 employees and over 30 years of experience, BayWa r.e. Solar Trade is one of the world's leading distributors of photovoltaic components. As a reliable partner for more than 20,000 customers all over the globe, BayWa r.e. Solar Trade offers top-tier solar components from carefully selected manufacturers and combines technical expertise, experience, and a passion for renewable energy to deliver the best solar solutions to and for their customers.

Ahead of the global shift towards renewable energies, BayWa r.e. Solar Trade saw considerable momentum. In 2023 alone, the company sold more than 10 GW of modules and inverters combined.

## Volatility and complexity across the supply chain

The photovoltaic (PV) industry experiences volatile demand, driven by short-term political decisions. On the supply side, the business faces persistent challenges, as most parts are sourced from Asia and have long delivery routes to its sites in Europe, Asia Pacific and the Americas. To add to this complexity, many components for PV systems are characterized by short product life cycles and high price volatility. In 2023, solar modules experienced unprecedented pressure, with prices dropping by more than 50%.

To overcome these challenges and enable

sustainable growth in the coming years, BayWa r.e. Solar Trade defined supply chain excellence as a strategic objective. Supply chain planning was identified as a focus area because of its potential to significantly boost supply chain maturity.

BayWa r.e. Solar Trade partnered with 4flow to take advantage of its expertise in supply chain transformation and software implementation. Together, the project team transformed the supply chain planning processes at BayWa r.e. Solar Trade from end to end for efficiency and responsiveness.

## Supply chain planning to enable end-to-end excellence

Together, BayWa r.e. Solar Trade and 4flow set the goal of synchronizing the PV business around a single source of truth and one supply chain plan. To do this, the team needed to establish state-of-the-art sales and operations planning (S&OP) processes.

The newly implemented S&OP processes use a combination of cross-functional collaboration, cutting edge software and concurrent planning to align supply chain planning with business goals. The result is a feasible end-to-end supply chain plan in which demand and supply are in synch.

The transformation to S&OP involved uniting processes across a multi-ERP landscape to connect local and functional planning silos. Until this point, the involved Solar Trade

entities used local processes for their supply chain planning. The new strategy was set to maintain a local focus in demand planning and forecasting, while enabling optimization across all entities globally. The new S&OP processes are currently running successfully in entities in 6 countries. With the rollout currently underway, the remaining entities will be added to the same platform, following a global S&OP governance framework with standard planning processes, planning cycles and horizons.

### **A new approach for disruptive technology: software first, then process**

With ongoing legislation and supply chain disruptions around the world, the PV industry grows more complex by the day, meaning the transformation needed to take place as quickly as possible.

BayWa r.e. Solar Trade set the course of the transformation with a clear strategy: process will follow technology. As a leading solar distributor, BayWa r.e. Solar Trade chose Kinaxis Maestro® as an S&OP platform based on core business requirements such as scenario planning and easy internal and external collaboration.

Together with 4flow, BayWa r.e. Solar Trade quickly set up the software's core capabilities. End users were involved at an early stage and given the chance to test the new software. Then, the joint project team defined planning processes based on their feedback.

"Typically, in projects like this, IT follows process. Yet with today's disruptive technologies, it's time to reconsider this approach. Innovative platforms like Kinaxis Maestro® lead to creative new processes. Exploring technology fosters innovative ways of working, and BayWa r.e. Solar Trade was an excellent innovation partner", said Marc Schleyer, partner at 4flow consulting.

### **Innovative strategy as the key to jumpstarting success**

While unconventional, the strategy of defining processes based on technology was a clear key to success. It enabled BayWa r.e. Solar Trade to focus on the essentials, implement best practice processes and templates, and take a rigid and disciplined implementation approach - meaning they could go live with the new system in record time.



The first go-live took place 10 months after the decision for Maestro®, and a total of 6 entities were rolled out within the following 6 months.

As more and more entities are rolled out, the collaboration between BayWa r.e. Solar Trade and 4flow continues to mature in step with the new planning process. "BayWa r.e. Solar Trade was strongly supported by 4flow experts in change, software implementation and process design", said Dominik Dohr, Global Head of Supply Chain at BayWa r.e. Solar Trade. "We benefited from best-practice experience while defining a new end-to-end planning process tailored to the needs of our PV supply chain. With the new planning process in place, we're able to manage our entire value chain

more efficiently and respond to changes and disruptions faster. We can now reduce the risk of shortages and overstocking, while enabling advanced supply chain collaboration both internally and with our vendors and partners".

## Results



S&OP process implemented for entities in 6 countries and aligned with over 300 stakeholders. Roll-out across 14 global entities in final phase with go-live 18 months after decision



Realization of one global source of truth for supply chain planning



Less than one year from decision to go-live with Kinaxis Maestro®



Increased supply chain agility realized by short planning cycles, shorter planning horizons and scenario planning

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**Dominik Dohr,**

Global Head of Supply Chain bei BayWa r.e. Solar Trade

# About 4flow

4flow is a leading provider of supply chain consulting, software and fourth-party logistics (4PL) services. With more than 1300 team members, 4flow is a global partner for its customers at more than 20 locations in Europe, Asia, North America, and South America. 4flow completes more than 300 projects a year in cooperation with customers on 5 continents, in more than 40 different countries and regions. 4flow is headquartered in Berlin, Germany.

# 20+

offices in Europe, Asia  
and the Americas

# 1,300+

team members globally

# 400+

customers globally

# 300+

projects annually around the world

