

**Achieving success with standards management solutions:
BRITA**

A watertight solution: how Brita uses Nautos to comply with global standards for drinking water treatment



“Searching for standards is no longer witchcraft with Nautos.”

Dr.-Ing. Stephan Eichhorn
Head of Group Technical Affairs



The BRITA Group is one of the leading companies in the field of drinking water optimization. The family-owned company based in Taunusstein was founded in 1966. It produces water filter jugs, water carbonators as well as plumbed-in systems in Germany, the UK, Italy and China and is represented in 66 countries on all five continents.

DIN Media: the Brita company has been around for almost 60 years.

Dr.-Ing. Stephan Eichhorn (SL): The father of our current CEO founded the company in 1966 and named it after his daughter Brita. The initial idea was to treat water at petrol stations for filling car batteries. This led to the realization that water treatment could also be useful for other applications. This is how the idea of water filters for domestic use came about. Cartridges for end consumers remain our core business to this day. We now also supply systems with large cartridges to commercial kitchens and hospitals. Besides this, we added water dispensers to our product portfolio a few years ago.

What is your function within the company?

SL: Until 2019, I was Senior Manager for Product Compliance at Brita GmbH in Taunusstein, Germany. Now I am focused on standardization work and representing the company in industry associations. At Brita we see the importance of being informed about legislative changes at an early stage in order to meet our own demands for quality and keep up with the speed of innovation.

How has the use of standards changed in your company?

SL: Early in the company's history, standards were definitely not in as much focus as they are today. Standards management in the truest sense of the word was not necessary; we only needed a few standards because many of the standards relevant today did not even exist at that time. Over time, however, so much has happened in the food sector and in the area of food contact materials that it is no longer possible to work sensibly without a standards system.

For example?

SL: The German Food and Feed Code is particularly important for us. As soon as you fill drinking water from a tap, it becomes a foodstuff. For all materials that come into contact with food, every country has specific regulations that are laid down in laws, and these laws refer to standards that have to be complied with. As a result, it is not only necessary to obtain the laws, but also the standards cited in them. Therefore, at the time, it was also the task of the newly established development department to obtain these technical rules and to become acquainted with them.

How did you solve the task?

SL: Initially, we collected the respective country-specific laws through our country organizations and stored them at the company headquarters. At our headquarters, the relevant standards were then obtained, from China, Japan or other countries – in the national language, of course. Then they were translated and filed away neatly; if you needed a standard, you had to go to the secretariat and look for it. Later, standards were made available wherever they were needed, initially as copies and later as PDFs. However, this led to chaos regarding the various single user licences.

And this became evident at some point?

SL: We became aware of this during an ISO 9001 audit. For about 15 years, we have had our quality management certified according

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to ISO 9001 in order to sustainably ensure the quality of our company. The auditors recommended that we set up a professional system for managing regulations and standards. For a few years now, we have been using a system from a globally active company to keep track of legislative changes throughout the world. And we installed Nautos* in summer 2022 for the management and procurement of standards.

Why did you choose Nautos?

SL: We considered two alternatives, one system from the USA and one from England. Neither alternative offered the required level of user-friendliness. Besides, from my previous work I was familiar with the predecessor system to Nautos, e-Norm. I always thought it was nice to see how speakers from DIN opened the system and found the standard they were looking for with just a few clicks. We also wanted something like that.

Which regulations are managed in your company?

SL: We mainly deal with DIN Standards; also with EN Standards and somewhat less so with ISO Standards. We also work on DIN and EN Standards in the corresponding committees.

To what extent is internationality relevant?

SL: As our headquarters are in Germany and we are a member of DIN and also contribute our knowledge there, the most important things for us happen at the national standardization level. A number of EN Standards are, however, becoming increasingly important for us.

What role did the costs play?

SL: They were not a critical factor at the time. The focus on the user-friendliness of the system and on German standards was more important.

You have been using Nautos for almost a year now. What is your impression?

SL: When I used to search for a particular standard, I needed the number to search our PDF storage system. If I didn't know the number, I had to look for it on the internet. With Nautos, I enter a keyword and am presented with a whole series of standard numbers together with information on which standard we have already purchased, which one is current, if there are any supplements, plus an abstract in several languages. That alone is already much more convenient.

What do you think of the changes when compared to e-Norm?

SL: My impression is that the previous system was not quite as transparent. With Nautos you can see the following points at a glance: Is the standard available, can I open it? Is it current? As well as an abstract that is available in several languages. That already makes things easier and benefits us.

How many staff do you need for your standards management?

SL: In addition to me, as the main person in charge, there are four assistants who supervise the process via Nautos and buy

standards. Searching for standards is no longer witchcraft with Nautos. It can also be used without much prior knowledge. Together with DIN Media, I conducted in-house training so that the thousand or so employees in Taunusstein now all have access to Nautos.

Who uses this service mainly?

SL: About 150 people here at our headquarters make good use of it. The main users are the employees from the product compliance and development departments. Frequently also employees from technical sales who want to learn more and sometimes also employees from marketing.

What are the main issues at your company currently?

SL: A big issue for us is the check valve function as mentioned in DIN 1988-100. This standard is important for appliances that are connected to the drinking water supply. For instance, the hose must be made of a certain material. A water dispenser system that treats drinking water is not allowed to be connected directly to the drinking water supply, but must be equipped with a check valve. Finding technically neat solutions for this in compliance with the numerous relevant standards is an important project for us.

What do you think about licence management?

SL: Relatively simple: we usually buy multi-user licences that everyone in Taunusstein can use. We have not yet had the case where we have to restrict certain standards for a small circle of users. If a standard cannot be obtained via Nautos, it can be downloaded from the DIN Media webshop and stored in Nautos, but only as a single-user licence. I would like to see a simpler solution.

What else do you expect from modern standards management in the future?

SL: For now, I'm quite happy. I expect that the system is kept up-to-date in terms of technology. Perhaps the non-specific intuitive search function can be simplified even further with algorithms. Support is very important: if I have a problem, I need a quick response. So far, however, it has worked out really well.

Nicola Prokop from Strategic Marketing at DIN Media, and interview partner and freelance author Antje Brunnabend would like to thank Dr.-Ing. Stephan Eichhorn.

* Nautos is the future-oriented standards management solution from DIN Media. Since 2021, Perinorm and e-Norm are gradually being replaced by Nautos. All e-Norm and Perinorm customers can benefit from maximum performance and flexible adaptation to their needs.