



# The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

## Final Copy of Case Study

**Status:**

Laureate

**Year:**

2013

**Organization Name:**

Fisker Automotive

**Organization URL:**

[www.onward.fiskerautomotive.com/en-us](http://www.onward.fiskerautomotive.com/en-us)

**Project Name:**

Designing Eco-Friendly and Exciting Automobiles

**Please select the category in which you are submitting your entry**

Emerging Technology

**Please provide an overview of the nominated project. Describe the problem it was intended to solve, the technology or approach used, how it was innovative and any technical or other challenges that had to be overcome for successful implementation and adoption. (In 300 words or less.)**

In 2007 Fisker Automotive set out to change the way the world thinks about transportation by developing cars that would be as exciting to drive as they would be environmentally friendly in order to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. As we worked toward launching our first car, the Fisker Karma, in record time, we needed to simultaneously get the company operational, to go from a product development company to a fully operational company. Having to do things better, smarter, faster and more cost effective, we knew we had to run the company as lean as possible. First we had to implement an ERP system. For us this was a once in a lifetime opportunity to put in place an single integrated, real-time, platform that supports the entire value chain of the company. A platform that leverages best practices business processes and delivers desired operational efficiencies. A platform that was flexible, scalable, cost effective and easy to use, SAP was that platform. Leveraging SAP's accelerator tools called "all-in-one" we managed to complete the initial implementation in just 16 weeks. Normally this process would take a year or more. We went live with SAP's Industry Solution for

Automotive, the majority of the core SAP ERP modules, SAP Business Intelligence, and the SAP Portal, which serves as the interaction platform for our Retailers and Importers to conduct their business. We leveraged a warranty Fast Start program, and went live with SAP's Sustainability tool called Carbon Impact onDemand, allowing us to measure corporate carbon equivalent emissions in an effort to be as environmentally friendly as possible. This project, along with the subsequent ones, met the challenge of supporting operational business processes within the value chain, providing the ability to make the right decisions the first time and execute accordingly.

**When was this project implemented or last updated? (Please specify month and year.) Has it incorporated new technologies and/or other innovations since its initial deployment? (In 300 words or less.)**

The initial go-live date was in August of 2010. The subsequent Fast Followers that saw the implementation of SAP Customer Relationship Management, SAP Business Planning and Consolidation, and SAP Mobile went live in December of 2010. We started the Fisker Karma media launch in February of 2011 and we sold the first car in December of 2011. We adopted a crawl, walk, run strategy for the deployment of these solutions. Fisker Automotive has since then, in the spirit of Kaizen, worked on continuous improvement projects as operational needs have changed and business processes has matured. Examples include improvements in the lead management and customer acquisition processes, and enabling full internal control of the production control and logistics processes. We have also continued to deploy our mobile platform as we wanted to leverage the association of sleek styling and easy to use, new technology. The mobile platform is for us a tool to guide the sales representative in explaining our technology and to tell our story. We developed a mobile application called the source for this purpose. Functionality includes a car configurator, various technology videos, but also a lead management application. Today, every department within Fisker Automotive is in one way or another impacted by and running SAP solutions. Whether it be Design, Engineering, Finance and Accounting, Human Resources, Purchasing, Sales, Marketing, Planning, Manufacturing, Production Control and Logistics, Supplier Quality Management or After Sales, they are all running on our one integrated platform SAP.

**Is implementation of the project complete? If no, please describe the project's phases and which phase the project is now in. (In 300 words or less.)**

At this point in time, these projects are complete and we are in continuous improvement mode or what we in the automotive industry call Kaizen mode. We can always improve, so the work never stops. Looking forward, we are intending to implement a complete Manufacturing Execution System and a next generation Supply Chain Management system as we move production of our next car, the Atlantic, to our Delaware manufacturing facilities.

**Please provide at least one example of how the technology project has benefited a specific individual or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work. (In 300 words or less.)**

Without these projects we would not be able to operate. Today, we are operating in the US, Europe, GCC and China and all of our key business processes are automated. All general controls are in place and we have full statutory and regulatory compliance. By offering high-style luxury automobiles that combine the power and efficiency of electricity with the range and freedom of a gasoline engine, Fisker Automotive is contributing positively to the global effort of conserving natural resources and minimizing carbon footprints. The Karma's tailpipe CO2 Output is only 169 g/mi, which is lower than that of a Toyota Prius. Thus, the Fisker Karma competes with full-size luxury vehicles but can get better mileage and has lower emissions than the best-selling hybrids. "Fisker Automotive offers everything you would be looking for in car from here into the future," says Mrs. Voutsas, a Karma model owner. "The cars come with solar and electric components and are great with gas. They're also fast, sexy and beautiful." "There's a clear trend towards environmental-friendly vehicles that bring back the love for cars," says Henrik Fisker, Executive Chairman, Fisker Automotive. "People are uneasy about cars due to the negative impact on society in terms of pollution and congestion. But they also want cars that excite them. With the capabilities that SAP give us, we can more easily create automobiles that generate excitement and are responsible about the environment without compromise." Alex Klatt, Vice President of Global Design for Fisker Automotive, says, "SAP helps us manage all the data we create from the raw data of the clay models through the digital model surface data down to the production parts. We could not complete the design process as fast as we do without the help of SAP."

**Would this project be considered an innovation, a best practice or other notable advancement that could be adopted by or tailored for other organizations and uses? If yes, please describe that here. (In 300 words or less.)**

The SAP platform that Fisker Automotive has deployed to streamline their operational business processes was based on and can serve as a best practice blueprint for the entire automotive industry, particularly for those manufacturers developing eco-friendly vehicles. Convincing consumers to drive eco-friendly cars will require manufacturers to apply high-end engineering capabilities that design attractive and powerful cars that do not consume as much gasoline and take advantage of materials that do not tax the environment. In order to facilitate the ability of engineers to create such designs, manufacturers will be in need of a platform such as the one that Fisker Automotive deployed. SAP makes it possible for Fisker to quickly compile complex data sets and share the information in real time with multiple internal personnel as well as external business partners. By streamlining data processing, all involved in the engineering process can thus focus more time on the key mission: designing and manufacturing eco-friendly yet attractive, powerful automobiles. The more manufacturers that adopt a similar approach, the more likely the automotive industry can turn itself into a more positive contributor to the quality of peoples' lives by being more environmentally friendly while also providing fun and exciting transportation.



**If there are any other details that the judges should know about this project, please note them here. (In 300 words or less.)**

Founded in 2007 Fisker Automotive is an American car company that designs, develops, builds and markets environmentally conscious vehicles with style, power and performance. The company's premier product is the award-winning Fisker Karma, the world's first premium Electric Vehicle with extended range (EVer), the Fisker Karma. Fisker is also a car company that fully embraces our environmental responsibility. The the Fisker Karma not only offers driving luxury but also allows drivers to complete their daily commutes without using any gasoline and with zero tailpipe emissions. Drivers don't have range anxiety because an efficient gasoline engine can create electricity when the battery is empty. Fisker is also pioneering the use of other environmental-friendly features for cars such as the world's largest and most powerful automobile solar roof, reclaimed wood trim, soy-based seat foam, low-impact leather and LED lighting. When Fisker Automotive first looked at the existing automotive landscape, one thing became quite clear: There were green cars and there were luxury cars. The two never overlapped until the Karma, a car that is both environmentally responsible and aesthetically pleasing.

