

# Sofonnews



Jeroen Heijndijk Marflex

Michael Smits Marflex

Vincent Snels Marflex

Thanks to Sofon, our sales staff can make 90% of quotations without the help of Engineering

**Business Case:** The Marflex sales staff faced a few challenges with their quotation process. They are now able to make 90% of quotations without the help of Engineering.

**Sofon Connected:** CTAC (SAP Gold Partner) and Sofon recently entered into a partnership. SAP users can now benefit from this collaboration.

**Experts speak out:** It used to take Bollegraaf a day and a half to make calculations and quotations. Sofon put a change to this.



*Even if you don't speak French, you can still make an accurate French quotation with Sofon.*

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## Communication

Have you ever asked yourself why more deals are not landed *sooner* than expected? Of course, every situation is different, but there are a number of reasons behind this frustrating reality:

- Sales representatives often spend more time on internal communications about an offer than expected
- Failure to inquire sufficiently into a customer's true needs results in inadequately prepared quotations, leading to uncertainty
- Minor changes in customer requirements leads to significant delays due to renewed internal consultations and approval processes
- Customer concerns remain unknown because sales representatives often do not focus on identifying risks and threats. This results in delays that are inexplicable to the salesperson.

All in all, there are plenty of reasons to take the necessary action to ensure clear and unambiguous communication about customer desires and the subsequent offering of products and services. A lack of clarity leads to uncertainty and uncertainty leads to delays.

Sofon Guided Selling is designed to significantly improve the communication process. In this edition of Sofon News, you can read all about how Bollegraaf and Marflex have accomplished just that.

Otto van der Tang  
Managing Director



## Editors:

Marijn Schouten - Sofon  
Judith Steinmeier - Sofon

## Lay-out:

Grefo Prepress - Sint Oedenrode

## Concept &amp; Design:

credo.creatie - Eindhoven

## Photography:

Hans van Asch, a.o.

Robert Nieweg

Eise Kroes

*Even if you don't speak French, you can still make an accurate French quotation with Sofon*

**Before implementing Sofon, Bollegraaf used to spend half a day carrying out calculations and another entire day making the quotation. Sofon, thankfully, put a stop to this. Eise Kroes and Robert Nieweg (both Sales Support Engineers) share the results with us.**

#### What kind of company is Bollegraaf?

Kroes: "Bollegraaf Recycling Solutions supplies solutions for the recycling industry around the world. Our product portfolio includes bale presses, sorting systems (among others waste paper, household waste and construction and demolition waste), shredders, conveyor belts, star screens and slitter-winders. In other words, we offer a complete package of products that allow our customers (among them municipalities and waste collectors) to recover valuable materials from waste."

#### What does Bollegraaf use Sofon for?

Kroes: "We use Sofon for product configuration, calculation and quotation generation. Sofon has enabled us to introduce standardization without compromising on the creation of a customer-specific product variant for our customers. We currently use Sofon to make 98% of our quotations."

#### What was the situation before you started using Sofon?

Nieweg: "Before, we put together each product using an Excel sheet that contained all components. This required a considerable amount of brainwork – and the risk of forgetting something or entering the wrong component was always there. Sofon has simplified our work significantly. Standards are pre-defined and Sofon takes all possibilities and impossibilities into account. As a result, we are always able to put together a feasible product variant and make an error-free quotation."

#### What were the risks before Sofon?

Nieweg: "We used to work with various calculation methods. Coworkers might put together the same product, but at



**Bollegraaf**  
RECYCLING SOLUTIONS

different prices. There were also risks from cutting and pasting text from old quotations. You had to make sure to change details like the dimensions. The new dimensions were also obtained from the Excel sheet. We're very pleased with the fact that Sofon automatically enters the right variables into the quotation."

Kroes: "We have achieved significant time savings in our sales and quotation process. It used to take me up to half a day to carry out all calculations. The secretary then needed an entire day to put together the quotation. It now takes only fifteen minutes to make a quotation. Highly complicated quotations take no more than thirty minutes."

#### How else have you benefited from Sofon?

Nieweg: "We submit quotations in various languages. Sales representatives go through the question-and-answer process in Sofon in Dutch. With only one click of a button, they can then create a perfectly accurate French quotation, even if they don't speak a word of French. Sofon also generates a bill of materials, which it then automatically forwards to Axapta. We now want to use Sofon to make budget quotations as well. This will make it possible to give our customers a price quote more quickly, so they can determine whether a solution fits within their budget before we set to work on making a 'real' quotation. This saves us considerable cycle time."

#### RESULTS

- 98% of all quotations are made with Sofon
- Standard process for customer-specific quotations
- Accurate quotations in various languages
- Shorter quotation cycle time. Savings of more than one day
- Only feasible product variants are offered
- Calculation of unambiguous prices
- Automatic bill of materials generation for ERP

*Knowledge safeguarding leads to greater standardization within Marflex*

# Case

## Sales staff makes 90% of quotations without the help of Engineering

What do you do if your sales representatives require detailed knowledge to make a quotation? That was the challenge facing Marflex, a developer and manufacturer of electrical deep well pumps for the shipping and offshore industries. The abundance of options and combinations made it difficult for the sales staff to provide an accurate quotation

### Guidance

The sales staff at Marflex required quite a bit of guidance in selecting the right options and variants. According to Heijndijk, “Our sales people had the right product knowledge, but they are not exactly technically savvy. Since we have a large number of options and variants, it sometimes happened that a sales representative combined the wrong items, or that the Engineering department had to be brought in to help prepare the quotation, resulting in a longer quotation cycle time.”

### Focus on own tasks

Marflex wanted to make technical knowledge available to its Sales department. Smits explains, “This would allow Sales

quickly. They often needed the help of the Engineering department. But, these days, Engineering is no longer involved in 90% of quotations that are made. Michael Smits (Director of Operations), Jeroen Heijndijk (Manager of Engineering R&D) and Vincent Snels (ICT Manager) explain the role Sofon played in this improvement.

and Engineering each to focus more on their own tasks. The sales staff could then create standard quotations without having to involve Engineering. And new sales representatives could easily be trained in this process.”

### Guaranteed results

The next step was to find a provider who could meet all of Marflex’s needs. Snels adds, “We looked into the configurator in our ERP system, among other options. But we needed a mature system that could deliver guaranteed results. Obviously, we didn’t want to take any unnecessary risks during the implementation process. Sofon turned out to be the best option for us.”

### Project team

Sofon quotation software was purchased and implemented without any hiccups. Heijndijk explains, “We wanted to translate the technical knowledge of the Engineering department into a question-and-answer format for Sales. So we put together a project team, which then compiled and stored all technical knowledge.” Snels adds, “The team was assisted by a Sofon consultant who worked very well with our Engineering department. This led to fast results.”

### More insight

A number of employees ended up leaving the company, resulting in several changes within the project team. Snels comments, “That’s something you try to avoid at all costs, since it often leads to delays. But Sofon dealt with this effectively and we lost very little time.” Smits adds, “This might very well have led to a better product. After all, the more people involved, the greater the insight and potential gain.”

### Right combination

After an implementation time of six months, Marflex went live with Sofon. Smits says, “Sales no longer requires the help of Engineering for 90% of quotations. The sales staff can now submit quotations with the correct specifications, simply by answering questions. If, for example, we want to offer a certain combination (pump, electric motor, fan diameter etc.), we simply enter the customer’s parameters into the Sofon software, such as the shut-off pressure and viscosity of the medium being pumped, and Sofon makes sure we do not make any errors and offer the correct combination.”

### Inexperienced sales staff, high-quality quotations

This knowledge safeguarding method has also made it possible for a relatively inexperienced sales team to make accurate quotations. Smits explains, “A new sales representative can now submit a quotation quickly and accurately – without the need for detailed knowledge.” Snels adds, “And if a sales representative is unable to answer a question in the questionnaire, he at least knows what question to ask a colleague.”

### Confidence

Marflex is extremely pleased with the results. Heijndijk comments, “Our quotations are of excellent quality, both in terms of contents and layout. They can be created quickly because they no longer require any typing.” Snels adds, “Now that we work with Sofon, we realize just how much effort used to go into making a quotation in Word. We often simply copied text from old quotations. This meant spending time checking through the entire text to make sure we didn’t forget to change anything. But now we know... Sofon is always right! We no longer have to read through the text and can send it off with confidence.”

### Fewer specials

Sofon has been received positively within Marflex. Smits explains, “Our sales people now calculate within the standard. Fewer unnecessary specials are offered as a result. This is something the organization really appreciates. Sales are also very pleased with Sofon. They may have less flexibility now because they have to work within the standard, but the speed and quality of the quotation process more than makes up for this.”

### Future

Marflex will be integrating a new product group into Sofon in the future. Smits explains, “It’s called NQZR. What makes this system unique is its integrated sensors which allow for continuously monitoring the pump. You can immediately see whether the pump requires maintenance, for instance. Our sister company is now also going to take a serious look at Sofon. The chances are good they will get the same great results!”



## RESULTS

- Knowledge safeguarding: when employees leave the company, their knowledge does not go with them
- Sales staff can utilize technical knowledge
- Sales and Engineering can focus on their own tasks: 90% of quotations are made without the involvement of Engineering
- Accurate quotations
- Improved quotation cycle time
- Shorter training time
- Fewer specials



Erik Versteijnen

Robert de Vries

Harrie van Groenendael

*Sofon enables SAP customers to improve their sales process*

# SAP Gold Partner CTAC considers Sofon a valuable addition to SAP

CTAC was looking for specific complementary software to SAP, while Sofon was looking for a strategic partner for SAP integration. Their searches brought them together and they recently established a partnership. In an interview with

Harrie van Groenendael (COO – Board Member), Erik Versteijnen (Managing Consultant for CTAC Business Services) and Robert de Vries (Business Unit Manager for CTAC Consumer Products), we discussed the reasons for this partnership.

## SAP Gold Partner

CTAC is a SAP Gold Partner that specializes in more than just SAP implementations. Van Groenendael: “We have succeeded in conquering a distinctive position in the market by not only offering the implementation of SAP but also offering complementary software and realizing SAP integration. We call this ‘composed solutions’. In certain sub-sectors, specific software applications offer a stronger functionality than is possible with the standards offered by SAP. Our goal is to meet the total need for information provision for various markets.”

## Complementary

SAP increasingly supports integration with other software. Van Groenendael: “SAP realizes that there are companies that provide valuable enhancements in certain areas. SAP

encourages these software companies to obtain official SAP certification. EcoHub, SAP’s online marketplace, also makes it easy to find SAP certified software.” Sofon software is also found on EcoHub.

## Certification

The integration between Sofon and SAP is fully SAP certified. Versteijnen: “This certification dispels any doubts in the minds of prospects. After all, a Sales Director may be eager to use Sofon for such benefits as greater quality and speed in the quotation process, whereas an IT Manager may have concerns relating to its integration. Now that the integration between Sofon and SAP has been certified, integration is no longer an obstacle for IT Managers. This is a good thing too, since the Sofon configurator offers significant added value to SAP users.”

### It's all in the timing

Traditional product configurators often do not become relevant until a sales order has already been created. De Vries: "But, at this point, it is actually too late. During sales negotiations, experienced and less experienced sales representatives make all kinds of promises – which then need to be fulfilled. Sofon sets to work before the quotation is even made. Sofon offers a sales support system in which knowledge is stored from throughout the entire organization. Sales representatives then access this knowledge using a question-and-answer form. As a result, they can easily carry out a needs analysis, configure products and make a quotation – online or offline – with the knowledge that they are offering a feasible product at the right price."

### Right questions at the right time

This type of solution is a true godsend for sales personnel working with SAP. Van Groenendael: "The right questions are asked at the right time. The technical configuration of a product in terms of detailed bill of material items is of little interest to a salesperson. Sales professionals think in terms of need. If, for example, I take my car to a garage to have an air conditioning system put in, I'm certainly not interested in how many nuts and bolts this involves. These kinds of matters are irrelevant during my conversation with the sales rep. When it comes to delivery those matters do become relevant."

### More than just a sales configurator

In other words, Sofon often fulfills the role of sales configurator in combination with SAP. Versteijnen: "The customer can choose to have Sofon run in combination with the SAP Variant Configurator, with Sofon controlling the SAP Variant Configurator. Sofon can also take over the task of the SAP Variant Configurator. In addition to quotations, Sofon then also generates bills of materials and routings based on the configuration. This data is then automatically converted to SAP."

### Division of roles

Sofon and CTAC have put much thought into the division of roles in projects for shared clients. Both parties focus on their own strengths: Sofon on the implementation of Sofon software and CTAC on the integration. Van Groenendael: "We see more and more often that SAP customers face complex configuration issues. They have no reason to hesitate to use Sofon. We make sure the integration is trouble free for the IT Manager. And Sofon software can be easily implemented, thanks to a well thought-out implementation approach that requires little consultancy work. Companies in a wide range of markets – from discrete production to house construction – can profit from our collaboration."



# New Customer in the Spotlight

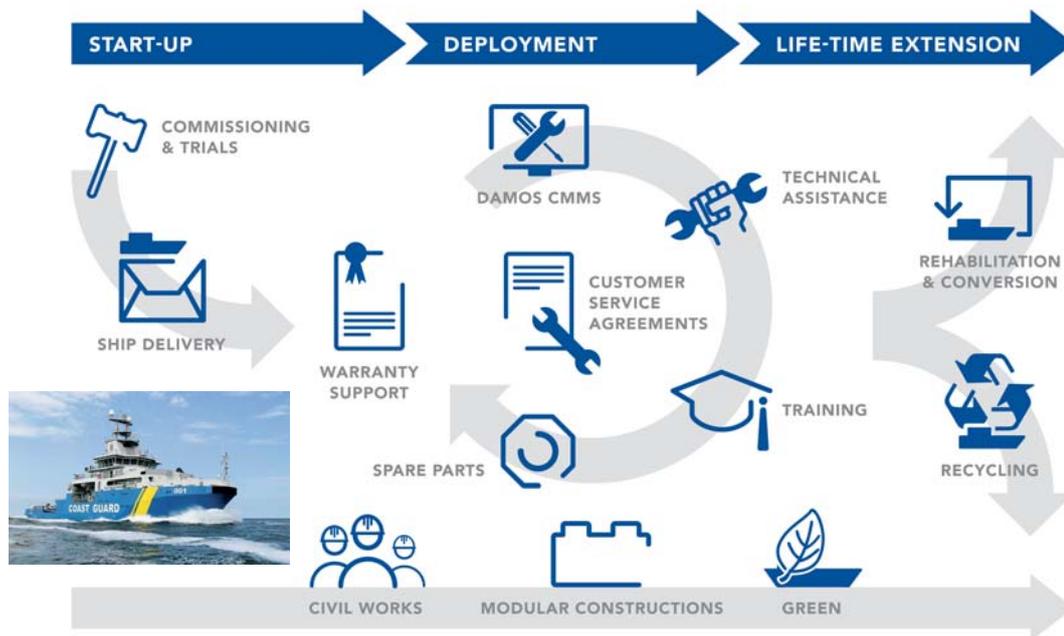
Sofon Guided Selling is used in various industries by – at first glance – totally different customers. Our customers operate in the world of industry, warehousing, transport, insurance, telecom and services. A short introduction to a new customer:

**DAMEN** Yet another business unit of the Damen Shipyards Group has chosen to implement Sofon Guided Selling. Sofon will now be used by not only the ‘High Speed Craft’ division, but also the ‘Services’ division. This business unit is experiencing significant growth and submitting more and more quotations for a variety of services from the portfolio.

From the moment Damen customers buy a ship, Damen Services provides complete life cycle support. Damen Services provides products for all aspects of the life cycle of a ship, from start-up to life extension. The products are designed to reduce lifecycle costs, improve quality and help achieve the required uptime. The service products can be used separate or in strategic combinations. By working closely with its customers, Damen Services develops constantly and is able to improve its services and products based on customer requirements.

Sofon makes it possible for the staff to easily generate a complete and consistent quotation with a customer-specific combination of service components. An international portfolio of clients means it is essential to be able to make quotations in several languages and currencies, which Sofon generates with ease.

## COMPLETE LIFE CYCLE SUPPORT



Sofon is the supplier of sales support software under the name Sofon Guided Selling. With Sofon, quotations, contracts, orders and other sales documents are put together simply, quickly and error-free. Among other things, Sofon Guided Selling supports calculation, configuration, visualization and document generation in any language desired. This decreases sales costs, reduces delivery times, increases the chances of winning business and improves cooperation between clients, dealers, sales, engineering and production. Sofon integrates with standard CRM and ERP systems and is suitable for all companies who have a client-specific way of operating – in every sector – anywhere in the world.

## activities

### Events

**Dreamforce 2011**  
30 August –  
2 September, 2011  
San Francisco, CA,  
USA  
Sofon will have a  
booth at this years  
annual international  
Salesforce.com event.

**CRM Expo**  
5-6 October, 2011  
Nuremberg, Germany  
Sofon will have a  
booth at the CRM  
Expo.

### Guided Selling Blog

Sofon is happy to share knowledge with you! In Sofon's weekly blog posts, various experts from the Sofon organization speak out. These experts have a clear insight and experience into best practices within the sales and quotation processes of companies who supply client-specific products and services. You can share in this knowledge by visiting [www.sofon.com/blog](http://www.sofon.com/blog).

### Twitter

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I [www.sofon.com](http://www.sofon.com)  
E [info@sofon.com](mailto:info@sofon.com)