

Sofonnews

Jan Hoxe Rollepaal

With Sofon, Rollepaal offers accurate products, quickly and for the right price

Business Case: Rollepaal now produces quotations for complete production lines four times faster while not impacting quality.

Longtime Sofon Customer: GEA Goedhart has proven that they save money with Sofon every day. Quotation and order errors are a thing of the past.

Experts speak out: Thanks to Sofon, VMG not only improved the quality of their quotations, their planning and budgets are more streamlined as well.



Quotations are more consistent and our planning is more streamlined thanks to Sofon

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Selection

In day-to-day practice, we notice that a wide variety of companies (and verticals) regularly come up against the same problem: the sales and quotation process is not fast enough and contains too many errors. Many of these companies enter an extensive selection process in search of a remedy; what is the right solution for us? Can we solve our problem with our ERP system? Or should we buy or build a configurator ourselves? The limitations of these solutions quickly become clear:

- An ERP system is not sales-oriented and often provides only minimal support for quotation generation.
- Customization quickly becomes obsolete and makes you dependent on the manufacturer.
- In some cases a product configurator offers quotation functionality along with product configuration. Often your product or service will be too complex for a package like this to handle and customization of the software is always necessary.

So what is the solution? A Sofon Guided Selling System based on standard software that is flexible enough to meet your needs. Whether you sell complex machinery, trailers, medical systems or financial services, the out of the box software can be quickly adapted to your business and products. Users with no programming knowledge can save product knowledge and rules, make it available to colleagues and adjust it to changed circumstances, products and business practices. Not only will you produce quotations more quickly, the quality of your sales process improves too. The proof? In this edition of Sofon News, you will read about the results achieved from Rollepaal, VMG and GEA Goedhart with the same standard – out of the box – software from Sofon.

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Frank van Hooft
ACCOUNT MANAGER

Erwin Heet
CALCULATOR

Quotations are more consistent and our planning is more streamlined thanks to Sofon



What does VMG do?

“VMG has specialized in the production of steel and aluminum balcony railings, balustrades and related products for more than 48 years”, says Frank van Hooft. “All our railings are made to measure and have a unique design.”

Erwin Heet continues: “We mainly supply contractors and housing corporations in the Netherlands and Belgium. We focus on both new construction and renovation projects. We are not active in the private market.”

What was the situation like before Sofon?

Frank van Hooft explains: “Previously, we produced calculations on paper or in Excel. We then finished quotations manually, after which colleagues would retype and complete the quotations. There was a lot of repeat work. The process took up a lot of time and was prone to error. Apart from that, every quotation looked different in terms of design, organization and product description.”

What is the situation with Sofon?

“With Sofon we have achieved uniformity”, says Erwin Heet. “It doesn’t matter which calculator produces the quotation: content, price and layout are the same. This is not only much more convenient for our customers, but also for internal processing. Now all our knowledge is stored in Sofon, we can easily see how many hours will go into any railing, how many kilos of steel are necessary... In short, how much a project should realistically cost us. In this way, our budget is immediately clear. Feeling and experience still play a part, but less than they used to.”

Frank van Hooft goes on: “So previously we could easily be a few hours or kilos off. Now we can control and plan a project far more efficiently. Our department ‘Drafting’ knows exactly how many hours they should spend on a project. And our

‘Buying’ department knows which materials they need to order and what they can spend. The budget drives this and must therefore be critically guarded.”

Which advantages does Sofon offer?

Frank van Hooft: “Now the sales process is automated, we can focus on other matters. We no longer need to think in terms of man hours and kilos needed. We now pay more attention to the details and other important matters. We now have more time to look at what a customer actually wants, to name one.”

Erwin Heet: “Even if a customer wants a change in a quotation, we can respond to his request more quickly. For example, if he wants another pane of glass we usually don’t even have to consult the physical file. Calculating and adjusting quotations is quicker with Sofon. If the customer is in agreement, Sofon then generates a budget. That also saves time and prevents errors.”

RESULTS

- Quotations are uniform and correct
- Budgets and margins are immediately clear, making precise planning possible
- More attention to customers’ wishes due to time savings
- Revised quotations quickly generated
- Bills of materials are constructed and passed on to ERP automatically
- Link to ERP makes manual input unnecessary

*Everyone speaks
the same language
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Jan Hoxe

Case

With Sofon, Rollepaal offers accurate products, quickly and for the right price

Rollepaal specializes in designing, building and installing high-end machines that produce plastic pipes (including PVC, PE, PP and ABS). Rollepaal is located in the Netherlands, the USA and India. With years of experience and deep domain exper-

tise within their industry, the need to stay competitive lead Rollepaal to evaluate – and ultimately improve – their sales and quotation process. Jan Hoxe (Manager Customer Service) explains what role Sofon plays in improving this process.

Production process

Making a plastic pipe is more complex than you would think. Hoxe explains: “We call the heart of the line, the propulsion power, the extruder. To make a PVC pipe, for example, a powdered PVC material goes into the extruder and is processed using two counter rotating screws and a combination of heat, high pressure and mixing. When the grain becomes liquid, the material is pushed through a spray head, making the pipe take shape. After that, the pipe is cooled, so that the pipe reaches its final form and hardness. There are years of

knowledge and experience behind this production process, all expressed in our machines.”

Uniformity

Rollepaal understood that safeguarding their company knowledge was the basis for a good sales and quotation process. “When knowledge becomes available to all staff, everyone starts speaking the same language. We wanted to achieve this uniformity so that undesirable proliferation of texts and prices would become a thing of the past as much as possible.”

Apart from that, working with various systems cost Rollepaal a lot of unnecessary time. “First of all, a machine or production line was put together in an Excel sheet. This information was then used to produce a quotation in Word. After cutting and pasting we would add prices to the quotation that were calculated in Excel. All in all, these different steps cost us too much time.”

Little support needed

Rollepaal hoped to speed up, improve and simplify the quotation process using Sofon. “We actually took care of implementation almost by ourselves. As Manager Customer Service I am also responsible for various projects, including the Sofon project. Working with a colleague, we organized Sofon to our own specifications. We decided which models we needed to make, which standards and prices we wanted to use. After that, two staff members immersed themselves in Sofon modeling. They only needed four days of support from a Sofon consultant. We now also manage any changes or maintenance to Sofon ourselves. We feel comfortable with this and it saves us a great deal of money from having to pay outside consultants when a change is needed. And of course that’s the idea behind Sofon: training the customer to work independently after a certain amount of time. Not only was this successful, it was also a speedy process.”

Fewer actions

Now Sofon is in use, fewer separate actions need to take place. “Calculating technical possibilities for a machine or line (capacity/speed) still takes place outside of Sofon. We can then select previously defined machines in Sofon. Any pipe measurements, options and such are then easily added to the combination. Sofon then generates the quotation using previously defined prices and text blocks. We really took a good look at all of our texts before labeling it as standard text because every sales rep should feel comfortable with the verbiage. The result of this is an unequivocal and easy way to make quotations and calculate costs.”

Same prices, same language

These days everyone speaks the same language and quotes are offered at the same prices. “In the beginning some sales reps thought that their freedom in what they could offer would be limited. However, as an organization, we guarantee that the right products are supplied for the right price. That

insight makes adoption easier. Apart from that, we made sure the introduction of Sofon was at a pace which was comfortable for the sales team. When we had stored the data for certain products in Sofon, we would produce the accompanying quotations using the new method. Gradually, more and more products were included so more quotations could be made. This all took place on our time and everyone had the chance to provide us with feedback. When sales reps themselves see that the quotation process moves more quickly, they appreciate the time and advantage the tool provides.” And producing quotations is certainly speedier. “Previously, we would quickly have a pile of requests which would take considerable time to process. Now that we work with Sofon, we can process all requests within a day. A quotation for a complete production line can be generated within the hour; this used to take at least half a day. Even then we wouldn’t be completely sure the content was absolutely correct.”

Risk of error

The risk of error is now also much smaller. Especially in revised quotations. “In the old situation you would find the Word document and delete a machine or add one, and then adjust the calculation in Excel. All these actions took a lot of time and concentration as errors could be disastrous. Big mistakes would usually be caught in time, because they would be conspicuous during a check. Smaller errors in options and numbers would creep in more easily. Sofon helps us to prevent all kinds of error, ensuring the product can actually be manufactured.”

RESULTS

- Company knowledge is made available
- Fewer separate actions in different systems needed
- Quotation creation time shortened: from half a day to one hour
- Not much consultancy needed during implementation: only four days for the entire project
- Maintenance Sofon completely managed by Rollepaal
- Quotations and prices are correct and uniform





*With Sofon the errors
in project forms are
down from 60% to 0%*

Digni van der Zande

Doing business internationally comes easier to GEA Goedhart thanks to Sofon

GEA Goedhart has been manufacturing heat exchangers – such as air coolers and air-cooled condensers – since 1933 for (semi)industrial and commercial applications. Manufacturing takes place in both the Netherlands and in the Czech Republic. Since 2003 Sofon is utilized for product configura-

tion and quotation generation at GEA Goedhart. The whole GEA division is using the Sofon model after Goedhart became part of the GEA Group in 2006. Digni van der Zande (Manager Order Desk/Back Office) explains the impact of the introduction of Sofon.

Few secrets

Digni van der Zande has been with GEA Goedhart for almost forty years and has worked in almost every department. The company and its operating processes hold few secrets for him. “GEA Goedhart is a great company. We supply high quality products to – among others – cooling and freezing houses, and distribution centers for supermarkets. We supply the products to contractors who are responsible for further installation and implementation.”

Retyping errors

For calculations concerning cooling techniques and configuring their products, GEA Goedhart previously made use of a software program they wrote themselves. The informa-

tion that came out of this system, was then retyped in a word processing program to put a quotation together. “Retyping sometimes led to errors in quotations and therefore in orders. This was how we once supplied four enormous air coolers to a company in the US. After assembly it came to light that the cooling fins were not in the right position. You can imagine that the extra costs of transport – to the Netherlands and back again – extension and assembly, were enormous.”

No longer dependent

GEA Goedhart wanted to prevent such costly errors. They had also come up against the limitations of the old system. “It could no longer process the huge volume of our calculation rules. And the person who wrote the program was retiring



and taking a lot of product knowledge with him. Sometimes we could not explain why a certain method of calculation had been chosen. We realized we had made ourselves quite dependent on one program and one person. We needed to change that, and do it quickly.”

Adopting the software

GEA Goedhart needed software that could process enormous amounts of data. The software should also be easy to maintain by in house product experts. “That was possible with Sofon’s configurator. In under a year’s time we filled Sofon with knowledge from all over the organization and tested extensively. This enabled us to adopt the application across the organization at a reasonable pace.”

No more estimates

For GEA Goedhart, Sofon’s configurator calculates the measurements of the material needed, the prices and the number of hours needed for production. “That was an enormous step ahead. Where we previously had to estimate 40% of a quotation ourselves, we now produce a complete, reliable and realistic quotation with one keystroke.”

Change process

The implementation of Sofon was part of a large change process. “At the same time as Sofon, we also implemented the Baan ERP package. In Sofon, production bills of materials and routings are made that then go into Baan. After that, purchase orders are automatically generated.” Apart from the purchase of new software, internal operating procedures were also adjusted to a new work method. “It was a large-scale operation in which people were also moved to other departments. In fact, the whole organization was made more efficient.”

Making company knowledge available

What GEA Goedhart especially wanted, was to be able to guarantee continuity and make company knowledge available. “And that succeeded well. Knowledge no longer disappears from our organization as soon as a colleague leaves. Also, new staff is quickly trained. They can produce their first quotations within a week. Previously, extensive training was necessary to bring sales reps up to speed. Now they are productive almost from day one.”

From 60% errors to 0%

GEA Goedhart also wanted to improve the quality and precision of quotations. “I used to be the first one to see all project

forms. That was a real source of irritation. Some orders were completely impossible to produce. There were errors in 60% of our project forms; that percentage has now been reduced to almost zero. So even if we can’t express the improvement in hard data, the reduction of errors clearly saves us money every day we use Sofon. We can therefore say we are more than satisfied with the final results. For us, Sofon is the ideal tool.”

Forecast

GEA Goedhart also uses Sofon to produce all sorts of mailings and reports. “We can see exactly how many quotations are outstanding and what the sales forecast is. Sofon calculates this using a number of data points: total quotation sum, scoring rate, type of materials and the quote expiration date – the day on which we think that the quotation will become an order. This gives us certain expectations. So we now know for example how much steel, copper and aluminum we need.”

GEA division

Since Goedhart has become part of GEA, the Sofon model is also available to the entire GEA division. “That’s great, as an international GEA sales rep can offer our products – after a short training period – in combination with other GEA products. We produce quotations in Dutch, English, German and French; with one command you can switch the quotation output from e.g. English to German – even if you don’t speak the output language! Doing business internationally has become a lot easier thanks to Sofon”, states Van der Zande.

RESULTS	
·	Specialist knowledge is now easily available to all sales staff
·	The quality and precision of quotations has improved greatly
·	The errors in project forms are down from 60% to almost 0%
·	The reliability and maintenance of software used is guaranteed
·	Quotation and sales process is under control
·	Complete insight into sales forecast
·	Whole GEA division can offer GEA Goedhart products
·	Training time shortened

New customers

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 few new customers:



Mitsubishi Elevator Europe supplies, installs and provides service for elevators. Most are full set Mitsubishi elevators made in Asia. Apart from that, customized elevators are produced in-house.

Sofon has been selected as the quotation and calculation solution for the “Sales and New Construction” department. Sofon will also be used to streamline the order processing towards the executive departments.



Philips Healthcare, a global leader in professional healthcare products and solutions, has been a Sofon customer for many years.

Following an implementation and roll-out for Philips’ sales force in EMEA/AP regions in 2010, Philips Healthcare has recently decided to extend its use of Sofon Guided Selling. Their sales force in Patient Care and Clinical Informatics solutions in North America will also start working with Sofon software.



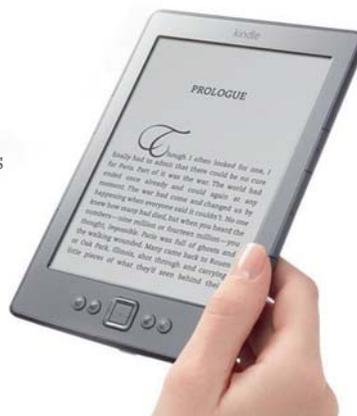
KPN Corporate Market (former Getronics) provides many different, complex services to (in particular) large companies and institutions. As a service provider, KPN Corporate Market is active in several areas: Datacenters (housing, hosting, storage, back-up and archiving), Workspace (devices, collaboration solutions, cloud computing), Connectivity (contact center solutions, VoIP Solutions) and Consulting. The extensive and often complex quotes for these services and solutions were previously made in a custom-build software solution, the bid generator.

This solution no longer met KPN’s needs so after an extensive selection process, the Sofon solution was selected as new quotation generator. Critical points on where Sofon scored well: efficiency, maintenance of data, browser use and integration with SAP. KPN Corporate Market has started the Sofon implementation for 200 users.

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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 scoring rates and improves cooperation between customers, dealers, sales, engineering and production. Sofon integrates with standard CRM and ERP systems and is suitable for all companies who have a customer-specific way of operating – in every sector – anywhere in the world.

activities

Events

CRM Expo
10 to 11 October 2012
Essen, Germany
Sofon has a booth at the CRM Expo.

IT & Business
23 to 25 October 2012
Stuttgart, Germany
Sofon has a booth at IT & Business.

Internal Logistics
30 October 2012
Veldhoven,
The Netherlands
Sofon has a booth at Internal Logistics.

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 customer-specific products and services. You can share in this knowledge by visiting www.sofon.com/blog.

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