

Sofonnews

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Now whoever produces the quotation, the prices and content are uniform thanks to Sofon

Business Case: VMG produces around 1,700 quotations every year. When making so many quotations, quality plays an important role. Sofon provided a welcome solution to this problem.

Sofon Connected: Generating a quotation accompanied by a correct sales drawing (layout) presented a time-consuming challenge for the Kaak Group. Sofon will provide a solution here.

Expert speaks out: Thanks to Sofon, DVC is able to produce accurate quotations faster. This not only resulted in higher productivity but also in increased chances of success.



We have gained so much time through Sofon that we achieve more with fewer people and also obtain more orders

3 Expert speaks out

An interview with Bennie Miedema of DVC. DVC manufactures and supplies promotional communication materials on canvas. The company also operates internationally through agencies. Thanks to Sofon these dealers are able to undertake calculations themselves without needing to get in touch with DVC's head office, saving time for both them and the sales office. Once DVC had seen the positive effects of the dealer application, the solution was expanded to include the sales office and the export department – all with positive results.

4 Business Case

5 VMG supplies balcony and gallery balustrades. Before Sofon was introduced, each of the calculators produced quotations in their own way. Differences in the way they worked were expressed in the layout, structure and product description, as well as in the price. With Sofon all this has changed. Whichever calculator now produces the quotation, the prices correspond and the structure is always the same. This makes things clear for both the customers and the employees of VMG.

6 Sofon Connected

7 With 700 employees, the Kaak Group operates across the world as a supplier of complete production lines for industrial baking. No two bakeries that Kaak designs for its customers are the same. Generating a quotation accompanied by a correct sales drawing (layout) therefore presented a time-consuming challenge. Sofon's software will be used to speed up and improve the quotation and calculation process. Parameters from Sofon will also steer the CAD system, which will make it easier to produce sales drawings. Kaak explains how these processes will be put into operation.

8 New clients – Calendar



Now or never?

When is the best time to invest in improvements to the sales process? This is an interesting question. Does it make sense to create a faster and leaner sales process when the economy is unfavorable? Or should you wait until the economy picks up strongly again?

The answer to the question is simple. *Now* is the best time to take action. Now is the time to ensure that your sales representatives are in a position to create better quotations faster. After all, whatever the economic situation, you will always benefit from improving sales.

When demand falls and your sales representatives are less busy than usual, there is more time for fundamentally improving processes. But that's not all. It is precisely when sales are falling that it is so important for every quotation to hit the mark. And it is precisely when things are becoming more difficult that it is so important to beat your competitor even more often.

When sales are growing strongly it is sometimes difficult to launch a project to improve the sales process. After all, everyone is already so busy. However, it is precisely when sales are growing strongly that it is even more important to ensure that every quotation and every order is exactly right, giving you the edge over your competitors. Your production department or back office can easily rectify an error when the business is slow, but, when the sales team is working at full capacity, errors in quotations and orders can bog down your back office completely.

By waiting to improve your sales process you are therefore only helping your competitor. So what are you waiting for?

In this edition of Sofon News you can read how the companies DVC, VMG and Kaak have chosen their moment and are now benefiting from the structural improvements that Guided Selling has enabled them to make. DVC rightly points out, that in troubled economic times, customers order smaller quantities, but request a quotation more frequently. The company's sales office is therefore busier, but DVC is responding to this with ease – thanks to the time and efficiencies it has achieved through Sofon.

We hope you find lots of inspiration.

Otto van der Tang
Managing Director



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*New employees
are productive
from day one*

Bennie Miedema
HEAD OF THE
SALES OFFICE

Expert speaks out

Name: Bennie Miedema

Job description: Head of the sales office

Company: DVC

Product: manufacturer and supplier of promotional communication materials on canvas

Branches: DVC, Flag and Sign, Holland Mast, "Mijn Eigen Vlag" and "Vlaggenwinkel" (NL)

5 questions for a Sofon User

1 What does DVC do?

"DVC manufactures and supplies promotional communication materials on canvas. We have been operating for 75 years and are the market leader in the Netherlands. We are also active internationally through agencies. Within Europe we are currently one of the five biggest flag manufacturers. As a company we focus on a good price/quality ratio, reliability of supply, innovation and flexibility. A flexible tool such as Sofon fits in well with these areas of focus."

2 What does DVC use Sofon for?

"Our dealers were the first to start using Sofon. They are now able to make calculations themselves and no longer need to call our head office for this, saving time for themselves and our sales office. Once we had seen the positive effects for our dealers, we wanted our sales office and export department to start working with Sofon too."

3 What has changed since using Sofon?

"Before we began using Sofon there was a great deal of duplicate work: one person noted down the customer's wishes on paper. Another produced the quotation. A third person then checked the quotation. Now the productivity of our employees is much higher. They get more done and Sofon allows them to work more quickly and accurately. An employee in the sales office is able to generate a quotation in just a few minutes, while the customer is on the telephone. The customer can assess the quotation immediately and business can therefore be done directly. This also ensures that a customer is not so quick to request a quotation from a competitor and that makes a difference in terms of sales. Also, even if a competing quotation is requested, we are much quicker to respond. This ensures that we make a good impression in any case. We are complimented on this every day."

4 Does Sofon offer added value in the current economic situation?

"At present we have 15 to 20% more orders than last year. In troubled economic times people order less, but do so more often. This means that our sales office has more work. Sofon is the perfect tool for dealing with this pressure. We have gained so much time through Sofon that we get more done with fewer people and also obtain more orders. We are almost no longer able to imagine what life would be like without Sofon."

5 Do you see other advantages?

"By creating a link between Sofon and CRM we are working more professionally as a company. Previously every employee had his or her 'own' customers. Now there is more interchangeability. If a customer calls, his details are no longer only familiar to one colleague, but to all colleagues. This enables us to offer our customers better service. New employees are also productive at an earlier stage. In the past, an employee was given information to learn about our products for a period of six weeks. After 10 to 15 weeks an employee was able to become truly productive and speak to customers on the telephone. I now let people start entering orders straight away. Thanks to Sofon, they are therefore productive from day one and, after six weeks, an employee is already able to sell on the telephone. This allows us to generate more sales and the pressure on colleagues is relieved."

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Case

VMG personalizes quotations with Sofon

VMG supplies balcony and gallery balustrades. The company is automated and robotized to a large extent. Thanks to this combination VMG is able to deliver custom solutions for the price of standard balustrades. Market leader VMG places the emphasis here on safety, quality and an eye for detail. With around 120 internal staff and 60 installers working in the field, each year work is carried out at 200 to 250 construction sites. This equates

Pen and paper

In the factory and drawing office VMG is fully automated. This was not so much the case in the supporting departments. Nagelmaeker: “We are emerging from a time when we practically used pen and paper to make our quotations. Our calculators used Word and Excel tools for this. Each of the calculators drew up quotations in their own way. Differences in the way they worked were expressed in the layout, structure and product description, as well as in the price. Calculators estimated processing times differently, for example.”

to around 1,700 quotations and 250 kilometers of balustrading. When it comes to producing so many quotations, quality plays an important role. Sofon provided a welcome solution to this problem. Roel Nagelmaeker (financial director/project manager) and Albert Rijneveld (controller/model builder) explain the decision to use Sofon and the changes that Sofon has brought about.

Sofon principle

Sofon came into the picture to make uniform quotations and to offer more insight into the quotations produced. Rijneveld: “What appealed to us first of all was Sofon’s question and answer structure. Thanks to this structure it is no longer possible to make errors or forget questions. We also agreed with the Sofon principle that knowledge is modeled once and is managed in one place. This is much more efficient than having knowledge spread over different documents. This aspect also makes it easier to maintain. Moreover, IT knowledge is

not a requirement for working with Sofon. Although some affinity could be useful.”

Insight and acceptance

For VMG, working with Sofon meant acquiring advanced insight. Rijnveld: “Naturally, the first thing you have to do is get to know the Sofon software. However, you also have to learn to define your product and to make knowledge available in an effective way and in the right place.” Nagelmaeker adds: “Eventually, we decided to restructure our models, because we had gained greater insight into our products and the production process. After introducing Sofon we gave our employees the option of falling back temporarily on the old method of working. Now, however, almost everything can be done using Sofon. A small club of enthusiasts were quick to appreciate this – they acted as a kind of accelerator for acceptance – and now all our employees recognize this and work is carried out more or less exclusively with Sofon.”

Quality and uniformity

Now that VMG works with Sofon the quality of the quotations has increased further. Nagelmaeker: “Each customer can feel that attention has been paid to their quotation. We opted for the ultimate personalization, with every answer within the question and answer structure building up part of a sentence rather than a complete block of standard text. This makes a quotation completely personal, and also a customized product in itself.” VMG has been able to standardize its method of working. Rijnveld: “Whichever calculator now produces the quotation, the prices correspond and the structure is always the same. This not only makes things clear for our customers, but also for our drawing office, which begins their work with the order confirmation from Sofon. This saves them time looking for information and, therefore, expensive engineering hours.”

A moment's work

VMG works with the ERP system ISAH. Nagelmaeker: “Previously we drew up our bills of materials using pen and paper, or in Excel. We then processed these data in ERP. For a large project – with many different product lines – this took up a relatively large amount of time: a couple of hours. With Sofon a bill of materials is compiled automatically and correctly during configuration and passed on to the ERP. It has become just a moment's work.”

What has VMG achieved with Sofon?

- Uniform, error-free, complete and clearly structured calculations and quotations
- Standardized method of working
- Reduced training period
- Changes can be applied quickly now
- Quotations can be easily recalculated with new changes
- Greater insight into quotations produced
- Knowledge made available and maintainable in one place
- User-friendly
- Automatic compilation of bills of materials and passing on to ISAH: previously bills of materials were compiled manually. This easily took up half a day. Thanks to the Sofon interface this is now a moment's work

Quick familiarization

A number of processes are now quicker at VMG than before. Nagelmaeker: “The training period for new employees has been reduced. It still does not make new employees ‘balustrade experts’ straight away, but it does mean that they can be deployed quickly. Prices are also updated more promptly. Calculations no longer have to be redone. A new price list is read into Sofon and the prices are automatically adjusted. Customers certainly find it convenient to see the price-related consequences of a modification – a narrower rail, a different color – more quickly.” Rijnveld goes on: “It is not only the prices that can be adjusted simply, however. Other changes can be made just as easily. If we purchase a faster machine in the factory, the standard time and costing details are also adjusted. In the old days you would have to put up a memo and then you would just have to hope that this would be seen and remembered.”

Future plans

VMG has big plans. Nagelmaeker: “In the future we want to gear our quotations to the customer and to the customer's needs even more. This will also include some work on the design of the quotation.” Rijnveld: “We also want to further optimize and supplement our current method of working. What's more – although this will lie even further in the future – we want to achieve integration with CAD for various purposes. We are excited by Sofon's capabilities in this area.”





Erik Slagman

Leo Jansen

Sales drawings are created based on parameters from Sofon

Kaak makes use of Sofon for calculations, quotations and steering CAD

With 700 employees, the Kaak Group operates as an international supplier of complete production lines for industrial baking. No two bakeries that Kaak designs for its customers are the same. Generating a quotation accompanied by a correct sales drawing (layout) therefore presented a

Many processes

A complete production line for a bakery involves many processes. Slagman: “In order to make bread, the dough first has to be kneaded, shaped and placed into baking tins. The dough then needs to rise, before being baked, cooled and sliced. Subsequently, the bread is frozen or packed, for example. We supply all the machines necessary for this, as well as the transportation from one machine to another. For each country, each customer and each type of bread there are different needs and requirements. This makes producing a quotation a complex matter.”

A great deal of work

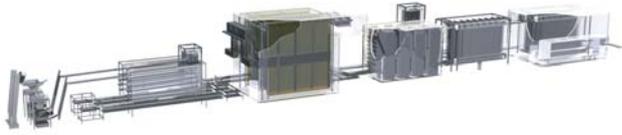
When an enquiry came into Kaak’s quotation department, an employee would set to work on the specifications. Slagman:

time-consuming challenge. Sofon’s software will be used to speed up and improve the quotation process. Erik Slagman (Area Sales Manager) and Leo Jansen (Design Engineer) discuss the situation before and after Sofon.

“The type of bread and the desired baking and rising times determine the production line. Using this information we calculated how large the machines needed to be. We visualized these machines in the correct sequence with the help of 2D drawings. Then we produced a new drawing in order to show the side elevation of the sales drawing. This allowed the customer to make sure that the production line would not be too tall in the designated space. The drawings took up a great deal of time.”

Calculation and quotation text

The next step in the quotation process was to work out the calculations. Jansen: “The sales drawing that we had produced formed the basis for the calculation. We retyped the numbers of each curved and straight section of the line from the sales



drawing into our custom-made system. We then checked to make sure that nothing had been forgotten or entered incorrectly. Checking all this could easily take a couple of hours. After this the quotation was completed with standard texts. These texts, however, did not *quite* correspond entirely, as a result of which another check was necessary. Making changes to the quotation was no simple task either: data had to be gathered again, machines recalculated and then checked. And when a quotation needs to be issued, the pressure is on. You want to make a change quickly. That's when mistakes are made."

The new process

Sofon will ensure that the quotation process changes for the better. Slagman: "When a sales representative returns from a visit to a customer, he or she enters the customer data into the Sofon Sales Organizer. The product data – such as baking times – are also entered using a question and answer structure. The designer in the quotation department then answers a number of questions concerning the baking tin (carrier), which results in a design. Once the data on the baking tins are known, we then know how large the oven needs to be. Subsequently we are able to calculate the size of the final proofer. And, if the customer also wants a cooling tower, we know how many loaves of bread will need to fit into it on the basis of the previous information. If a customer has several types of bread, this question and answer process is repeated. Ultimately, one type of bread determines how large the oven has to be and Sofon allows us to inspect these results."

Link with CAD

On the basis of the choices made, an XML file from Sofon will be offered to the CAD system Inventor. Jansen: "In Inventor, drawings are produced based on the parameters from Sofon. We have a large archive here containing models of

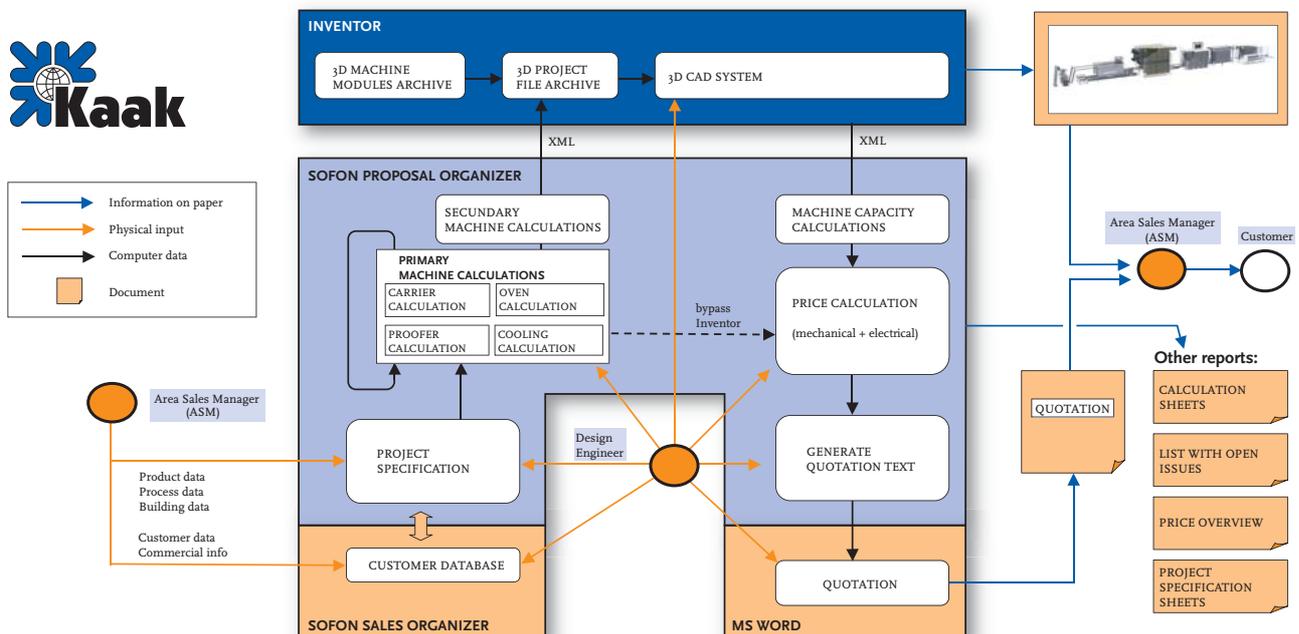
all the machines that we know within Kaak. Slagman adds: "You could think of these models as Lego blocks. Sofon specifies what Inventor takes out of the box of blocks and which parameter values this machine is given. The designer then "clicks" the machines together with the connecting conveyor belts. Once the design of the whole bakery line has been completed, the CAD system creates an XML for Sofon. Using this, the quotation and the bills of materials are produced in Sofon, including the added details from the CAD system."

Greater efficiency and fewer errors

Kaak is at an advanced stage with its plans. Slagman: "Ultimately the process needs to save us a lot of time. Amongst other things, this will be achieved by ensuring that the product data are made available more effectively in Sofon, that the technical calculations are carried out uniformly and that we no longer have to retype the layout in order to calculate the price. Also, changes will no longer need to be made in the quotation text. From now on the customer will receive a 3D version of the sales drawing, which will nevertheless be realized very simply with the help of the '3D box of blocks'."

What are the (expected) results for Kaak?

- The quotation process will run much more efficiently
- Parameters from Sofon will steer 3D CAD system
- Sales drawings will be easier to produce
- Switch-over from 2D to 3D layouts
- Technical calculations will be easier to work out
- Prices will be calculated automatically from the 3D layout; parts from the sales drawing no longer need to be retyped
- No more extra checks needed
- Standard quotation texts are dynamic and are adjusted by parameters from the 3D layout
- Changes in quotations can be made simply; the price is adjusted automatically
- Agreements are documented and are clear to everyone



New clients

Sofon Guided Selling is used in various industries that – at first glance – have totally different clients and products. Our clients operate in the world of industry, warehousing, transport, insurance, telecom and services.

A short introduction to a few new clients:



Pon Equipment represents Caterpillar earth-moving equipment. Pon Power focuses on the marketing, sales and distribution of Caterpillar and MaK engines for propulsion and power generation, primarily in the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. Sofon has been selected as the Guided Selling solution for Pon Equipment & Power Systems. Sofon implementation began in Q2 2010, including integration with a new ERP system, “Lawson Equipment Service Management & Rental”.



The family company Goudsmit Magnetics has more than 50 years of experience in the design and production of magnets and magnetic systems for applications including transport systems, metal separation, demagnetization and lifting installations. Over 50% of the company’s total production is custom built. The Goudsmit Magnetics Group has 8 companies in 5 countries. Their magnets are supplied to 100 countries worldwide. Goudsmit Magnetics recently purchased the Sofon Proposal Organizer and Sofon Sales Organizer in order to configure customer-specific products and machines quickly and simply, and to optimize the quotation and sales process.



Philips Healthcare, a global leader in professional healthcare products and solutions, has been a Sofon customer for a number of years. Following a regional implementation for Philips’ field sales force in Germany, Austria & Switzerland in 2008, Philips Healthcare has recently decided to extend its use of Sofon Guided Selling to all EMEA/AP regions. Sofon is being implemented as the Catalogue & Quoting Solution for Project Sales.



Langguth GmbH is an autonomous, medium-sized family business with a tradition stretching back over 75 years in the German region of Münsterland. The company supplies customized, high-quality solutions for the labeling of products – across the world. Langguth is introducing the Sofon Sales Organizer and the Sofon Proposal Organizer in order to optimize the quotation and sales process.



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. 100% Customer Driven.

calendar

September

to

October

Sofon regularly takes part in fairs and events in the area of CRM and ERP at home and abroad. We also organize seminars, client days and workshops with some frequency. In the period ahead you can expect Sofon at the following events:

21 September 2010

Sofon Customer Day
Restaurant
De Salentein,
Nijkerk (NL)

Annual Sofon Users’ Day for Sofon customers. The prime focus of the day would be to introduce the 2010 release of Sofon Guided Selling. New functionalities will therefore be discussed. A number of customers would also be given the opportunity to talk about their experiences with Sofon. Would you like to register? Visit www.sofon.com.

14 October 2010

Sofon Seminar
Restaurant
De Salentein,
Nijkerk (NL)

Sofon B.V.

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