



“Through better insight into margins we know what to say ‘yes’ to”



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Aweta develops, manufactures and sells installations for sorting and packaging vegetables and fruit. Aweta's installations can be found in more than 50 countries. The growth in complexity and variety of the installations made it more and more important to control the product portfolio. Aweta looked for a solution to improve insight into margins and the quality of quotations. Marcel van Ast (Commercial Engineer), Cees Hooijschuur (Financial Manager) and Eric Qualm (Head of Commercial Engineering) talk about the introduction and use of Sofon at Aweta.

Aweta improves insight into margins and quotation quality with Sofon

COMPLETE PROCESSING LINES

Some 45 year ago, Aweta's first product came on the market: a cucumber sorting machine. A lot has changed since then. Qualm explains: “These days, Aweta produces complete processing lines, including components like weighing systems, quality systems and packaging and palletizing machines. We're striving for a more and more integrated system with which we can handle all tracking and tracing.”

WISH: INSIGHT INTO MARGINS AND UNIFORM QUOTATIONS

A more extensive and complex product portfolio also means a more complex sales process. A reason for Aweta to want to simplify the sales process. Hooijschuur continues: “We wanted more grip on the relationship between cost price and sales price, in detail. By refining our cost price we could better underpin and guarantee our margins. Apart from that, we wanted to improve quotation quality. We saw that everyone used their own texts to produce quotations. For example, different conditions were used and faulty old texts were copied. That needed to change.”

IMPLEMENTING FOR EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

Aweta was pleased to take on the challenge with Sofon software. Van Ast: “After an initial slow start,

I took over the baton for model construction as of early 2010. We understood we shouldn't focus too much on what we ourselves wanted in the system, but that our starting point should be the wishes of the customer: the internal customer (engineering) and the external customer. I put all the expectations down on paper and after that everything went quickly.” Qualm adds: “The external customer is not satisfied with only a summing up all kinds of products. In the quotation, he wants to see his product going from A to B, via which steps and with a description of the accompanying functions. The internal customer wants to see a project specification and a project budget.”

KEEP IMPROVING STEP-BY-STEP

Aweta now has so much information structured and saved in Sofon that it is no longer possible to forget anything in quotations or orders. Hooijschuur emphasizes: “It is important to save information correctly in Sofon and to maintain it. You need someone dedicated to working on Sofon. This is not something you can do between other tasks. It is also better to enter changes as they occur instead of saving them up. In this way you can improve the system in small steps.” New staff also profits from the stored, up-to-date information. Qualm explains: “New staff become productive faster, after a week or two. Before we used Sofon, training time was a



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few months. And then people would only know a small part. Because the way the questions are asked in Sofon is always the same, they can quite simply offer different machines.”

EASIER AND FASTER UNIFORM QUOTATIONS

By now all quotations are produced via Sofon. Van Ast goes on: “Now we work from one system, there is no room for errors and different interpretations. Quotations look uniform and structured, both in form and in price. Whether we’re talking about a project in Korea, Russia or France.”

Qualm adds: “Now it’s faster and easier to put together quotations, we react to tenders from different countries much more often. You don’t see the effect of this immediately, but sometimes you reap the rewards much later. Without Sofon we wouldn’t even have responded to these tenders.”

BETTER INSIGHT INTO MARGINS AND SIMPLER APPROVAL PROCESS

Margin calculation has also become more precise thanks to Sofon. Hooijschuur: “Previously we only had insight into cost prices at a high level, per machine group. Now we have a better idea of what we’re saying ‘yes’ to. It’s clear what we give away and what we don’t. This has also made the approval process simpler.” Qualm adds: “An order confirmation is only sent out after approval by management. We especially look at risks and margins, including those in the areas of installation and transport. We make sure this is done correctly, as different countries have different rules.”

STANDARDIZATION AND SOFON STRENGTHEN EACH OTHER

Sofon also played a role in the area of standardization. Before Sofon was purchased, Aweta had already started on this. Qualm continues: “We have developed from using various designs to using only one family of design. We have seen that product standardization and the introduction of Sofon have strengthened each other. There is still a great diversity. Using Sofon, we can handle more and more of this diversity. Even if it gets complex, we keep things under control with Sofon.”

COOPERATION WITH PDM AND ERP

Because of the relatively limited number of orders they work with, Aweta did not feel the need for an automated order integration with their ERP or PDM system. Sofon now produces an order form along with the sales bill of materials. After this is stored in PDM, the production bill of materials is automatically produced and sent to ERP from PDM.

FUTURE PLANS

The introduction of a CRM system is still planned for the future. Qualm: “We want an easier way to search for all kinds of characteristics of quotations and we want to add other information, such as deadlines. We want to realize this along with the introduction of CRM. We are also looking at Sofon Sales Organizer for this. We also want to further improve quotations by generating them more from the standpoint of the customer. With these measures we can better spotlight our added value.” Hooijschuur adds: “Furthermore, we will continue to add knowledge lines, so that we can support more and more decisions with Sofon.”

WHAT DID AWETA ACHIEVE WITH SOFON?

- All quotations are produced using Sofon
- Precise calculation of cost prices
- Better insight into margins
- Quotations are uniform and complete
- Tenders will be responded more frequently
- Better quotation approval process
- Better management insight into quotations
- Complete project specification and more precise budget
- Training time new staff from months to two weeks

