



“Sofon is the strategic choice for us”



Robin Meinders IT MANAGER

Novoferm Nederland BV (part of Sanwa Shutter Corporation since 2003) is a manufacturer and supplier of quality doors for the industrial and private markets. Novoferm develops, produces and sells these doors from different branches in the Netherlands. Through a dealer organization and sister companies in just about every European country, their products find their way to an international marketplace. The Dutch branches have started using Sofon as their Guided Selling solution. Robin Meinders (IT Manager) explains why his company chose Sofon and what results have been achieved.

What other configurators never achieved, Sofon did

WIDE RANGE OF PRODUCTS

Novoferm manufactures a large variety of doors. “These are mainly sectional overhead doors, folding doors, swing doors, dock shelters, dock units... The sectional door is our most important product and represents a large part of our revenue”, says Meinders. “Every door we produce is customer-specific: there is always a hole that needs filling, so to speak, and it always has different sizes. And every customer has different preferences in color, operation, vision sections... Apart from that, we need to take into account insulation values and where a door is situated when it is open: upwards or parallel to the roof. There are many calculations behind this that make things complex. For example, a spring calculation (springs in a certain thickness combined with a cable drum) is done to keep the door panel balanced. Not only weight and height are relevant for this, but also the available spring thicknesses, the roof’s incline angle, the room available to install a door...”

PAST

At Novoferm Nederland BV, quite a few configurators have been used – both inside and outside ERP. “The configurators we used all soon showed their technical limitations.

The sectional doors were too complex for these packages to configure. A customized package for sectional doors was then constructed externally. This functionally high-grade product could even support our dealers. However, there was hardly any knowledge internally to help maintain this package.”

CONSCIOUS

After a while, Novoferm no longer wanted to work with a customized configurator for the sectional doors and with yet another configurator for the other products. “We found there was a real need for uniformity: we wanted to use the same methods and the same applications for all products and all departments. So we wanted one configurator that could configure products and produce quotations. Until that time, we were not capable of making proper quotations with any of the configurators used previously.”

CHALLENGE

Novoferm felt able to face the challenge with Sofon. “We decided to start with a pilot, because of the bad experiences we had had with other suppliers in the past. We started by modeling our most complex products: the sectional doors. We knew of no configurator



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that could handle this complexity. We really wondered whether it would be possible this time around. And yes, the pilot was successfully completed with Sofon in just a few months! After that, we started the actual implementation. We had had plenty of experience with configurators. That gave us a good insight into organizing the models, but we also found we had a great fit with the way Sofon worked.”

METHOD

Novoferm currently works with the Sofon Sales Organizer (CRM module), the Sofon Proposal Organizer and a far-reaching integration with SAP. “We set-up an opportunity or a project in the Sales Organizer. The product is then configured in the Sofon Proposal Organizer and automatically visualized. Bills of materials, routings and data for machine operation are then created. After that, the interface with SAP is started with just one key-stroke and a new SAP order comes into being. When the order goes into production, a set of data is sent on to the PCs on the shop floor. Finally the operator simply types in the order number and the machine automatically starts sawing, milling and drilling.”

RESULTS

A uniform work situation has now been created at Novoferm. “Quotations no longer have to be produced in Word or Excel.

We now take care of this in Sofon. Another advantage is that we only have to save all our data once and that this data can be used throughout the whole process. So we no longer have to retype data in SAP when a request becomes an order.” Also, a few advantages have been achieved in the areas of logistics and production. “Machine parameters are no longer passed on at the time of configuration, but only when SAP shows that an order will be produced. Now no old, erroneous machine parameters can slip through. The procedure for changes is also more flexible. If customers change their mind, bills of materials and routings are easily changed. That used to be a different story.”

FUTURE

Novoferm wants to put their whole range of products into Sofon in the time ahead. Another important step for Novoferm is to have dealers use Sofon. “We want our dealers to be able to configure doors via the internet. They can use the quotations and prices that Sofon generates for their customers. When it becomes an order, the configuration comes to us via email. After a small-scale check, the order is put through to SAP. Then an order confirmation is produced in SAP. There are actually no changes made between configuration and production. For us, Sofon is clearly an excellent strategic choice.”

WHAT HAS NOVOFERM ACHIEVED WITH SOFON?

- One solution (CRM, product configuration, visualization and quotation generation) for all products: uniform working methods and use of applications
- Less manual work
- Configuration of sectional doors: no other configurator achieved what Sofon achieved
- Maintenance of product lines under own management (without external programmers)
- Integration with SAP (SAP certified)
- Machine operation: parameters are determined at time of production not at time of configuration. In this way, any changes made between these times do not cause mistakes
- Data entered only once
- Flexible and faster change procedures
- Possible use of Sofon for dealers
- Good fit between product and company Sofon

