



“Sofon is a standard software package that feels like a custom solution”



f.l.t.r. Hans Hulsebosch IT MANAGER,  
Rene Haarhuis IT APPLICATION MANAGER

Plasticon Europe is Europe's largest producer and installer of composite structures. From their head office in the Netherlands, Plasticon oversees their production plants and international sales offices. Plasticon chose Sofon Guided Selling to optimize their operating processes. Together with Hans Hulsebosch (IT Manager) and Rene Haarhuis (IT Application Manager), we look back at the implementation period and we examine the results achieved.

## If it's in Sofon, it's right

### GROWTH

Plasticon's customer base is widely varied. Plasticon supplies customer-specific products for waste disposal plants, power stations, chemical plants, the steel industry, mining and more. The common ground that all of them share is the demand for products that are corrosion proof, such as storage tanks and pipe lines. “We have experienced strong growth in the last few years”, Haarhuis explains. “As a result of acquisitions, we have added a number of foreign offices. This growth made it even more important for us to improve the organization of our business. Our goal was to optimize our sales process, our (cost) price strategy and our operating processes. One of the methods we had in mind to achieve this was an effective product configurator that could generate bills of materials. We were originally considering customized software, but the problem with that is that you become dependent on the maker. We didn't want that. Our IT manager, Hans Hulsebosch, put us onto Sofon, as Sofon Guided Selling is a standard software package that feels like a custom solution.”

### IMAGE

The next step for Plasticon was forming a project team. “Sofon operates over and above departments”, Hulsebosch says. “Not only our sales office, but our calculation and in particular our work preparation team were introduced to Sofon. Before Sofon, they could still avoid certain questions that were not strictly necessary to produce a quote. A missed opportunity, as the answers are definitely necessary at a later stage in the (production) process. This is no longer possible with Sofon. All the crucial questions are addressed in Sofon and answers must be provided during the calculation process. This not only brings down the costs due to production errors, but also has a positive impact on Plasticon's image. If you pay a great deal of attention to every quote and every customer, you demonstrate a high level of expertise and understanding. Now Sofon is implemented, everyone at Plasticon works with the same information and in accordance with the same principle. Our Dutch office served as a key pilot programme. Since that time, our offices in France, the UK and Poland also have started working with Sofon.”



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### TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE

Plasticon was initially quite skeptical of Sofon. “For that reason, we may have tested everything for longer than was strictly necessary”, Hulsebosch says. “But we just couldn’t believe that software in this price category could deliver on so many promises. It was really too good to be true! But now we’re absolutely convinced – we didn’t encounter even a single show stopper during the implementation at any of the branches. Sofon also operates as desired on a day-to-day basis. We are now discovering that Sofon is more than merely a calculation and configuration tool. For us, Sofon also functions as a ‘communicator’ – a means of communication between our customers and the production department, between the subsidiary and the parent company... All of the information is made available in Sofon and is correct. At our company, we sometimes say: ‘If it’s in Sofon, it’s right’. We communicate only the right information and we only produce the right products. In this way, Sofon strengthens our market synergy.”

### LEARNING ON THE JOB

Plasticon is highly satisfied with Sofon. “Sofon itself doesn’t have a downside”,

says Rene Haarhuis, from his position as model builder. “The longer you work with Sofon, the more insight you gain into the models. This deepened insight has taught us that we would be better off setting up our model differently. We also observed that, because of Sofon, our calculators no longer had insight into the price structure. It was as if the calculation took place in a black-box. That’s not such a problem for a sales rep, but a calculator wants to know these things. We have added an option to make it possible to produce summaries of their calculations. Most likely there are still a few improvements to be made, but that too is learning on the job with Sofon.”

### USER-FRIENDLINESS

Plasticon appreciates Sofon’s user-friendliness. After all, Plasticon is a no-nonsense company that likes to keep a close watch on what’s going on. “Sofon Guided Selling is well-suited to Plasticon”, Hulsebosch says. “Sofon supplies the functionality, but we ourselves can organize the software in the manner that we see fit. That works out nicely, as we have a lot of good people with a lot of expertise. Sofon offers many possibilities to actually use this expertise. For instance, a model builder can start work after two days of training.”

## WHAT DID PLASTICON ACHIEVE WITH SOFON?

- Quotation cycle time shortened
- Order processing in organization much smoother
- Greater insight and control of operating processes and cost price calculations
- Greater efficiency through automatic generation of bills of materials
- Less failure costs because of clear and complete quotes
- Clearer communication between customer and sales rep
- Less dependence on in-house experts and external consultants
- Strengthened market synergy

