

Sofon news

Q1:
2009

ASEP is a manufacturer and supplier of standard and client-specific products (specials) for the oil and gas industry. In the past, ASEP needed 1.5 weeks to produce a quotation. With Sofon it takes 1.5 minutes.

Nido (part of the Aebi Schmidt group) is a manufacturer of machines used to combat icy roads. Nido uses Sofon to generate calculations, configurations and quotations. Nido is very pleased with Sofon, as Sofon is to become the standard configurator for the whole Aebi Schmidt group.

Sofon Connected: Drent Goebel produces unique rotation web offset presses. Drent Goebel needed a system that could quickly produce attractive quotations and contracts while also needing a connection to the PDM and ERP systems. Drent Goebel found a solution in Sofon.

Erik Poliste ASEP

Martie Heijnen ASEP

Piet Bekkers ASEP

Mark Verhoogh ASEP

Thanks to Sofon,
our quotation cycle
time improved from
1.5 weeks to 1.5 minutes



Jan Warmelink of Nido
A satisfied 'Sofon User'

We liked Sofon from the very beginning and now we wouldn't want to be without it.

SofonNews the magazine of **Sofon**
Guided selling

3 **An Expert speaks out**

An interview with Jan Warmelink of Nido. Nido is a manufacturer of machines used to combat icy roads and is part of the Aebi Schmidt group. Nido previously worked with a simple product configurator, but they soon wanted a more modern system with more potential. Sofon turned out to be the preferred configurator because of its flexibility and many possibilities.

4 **Business Case**

5 ASEP brought their quotation cycle time down from 1.5 weeks to 1.5 minutes with the help of Sofon without costing them anything in terms of design or precision. ASEP now generates professional, error-free and complete quotations that look much better than the old ones.

6 **Sofon Connected**

7 Drent Goebel purchased Sofon Guided Selling as a standard package, but soon found out that Sofon can act as a customized solution. Drent Goebel has now organized Sofon completely according to their specific needs and demands while finding working with Sofon very pleasant.

8 **Calendar – New clients**

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What would your revenue be if all your sales staff generated as much business as your most successful sales person? It's not uncommon for the top sales executive to sell at least three times as much as the less successful sales staff.

It can be enlightening to have a good look at what the precise differences are between these people. Often the better sales person has a head start because he has a **far more detailed knowledge** of the product and often knows the prospects pain. He knows which products will solve problems. He knows which options are permitted for this product and which ones aren't. Therefore the sales process is easier. The prospect feels understood and receives an appropriate offer that addresses his issues.

What would you have to do to get your whole sales staff selling like your best sales person? Admittedly, sales-supporting software does not solve all problems. A salesman who cannot listen will never become a good salesman even if he has the best software available. But a lack of knowledge can definitely be solved in specific parts of the sales process.

Sales people can be guided to ask the right questions with the right software. Sales people can also be helped by software to put together the most appropriate products and to make the right offers.

Sofon makes this software – and a rapidly growing number of companies are already experiencing the great advantages it brings. In this edition, read how Nido, ASEP and Drent Goebel profit from their use of Sofon Guided Selling.

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We liked Sofon from the very beginning. Now we don't want to be without it.

Jan Warmelink
HEAD EXPORT OFFICE

Name: Jan Warmelink
Job description: Head Export Office
Company: Nido Universal Machines BV (part of Aebi Schmidt group)
Product: machines to combat ice on roads
Branches: Belgium, Germany, England, Poland, Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Norway, USA. In countries with no Nido branch, Schmidt International sells their products directly.

5 questions for a Sofon User

1 What does Nido do?

“Nido is part of the Aebi Schmidt group. In the Netherlands we produce spreaders and sprayers to combat ice on roads. These machines are sold in the Netherlands and also abroad by our sister firms. These sister firms do not only sell our machines, they also make machines at some locations. We have a factory in Poland that makes snowploughs and a manufacturing location in Germany where street cleaning machines are made. These machines are mainly purchased by municipalities and the Ministry of Waterways and Public Works.”

2 Why did Nido purchase Sofon?

“We started off with a simple product configurator years ago. However, we felt that we needed a more modern system with more potential. We then compared a number of packages, but none of them were as flexible as Sofon. Sofon also offered other interesting possibilities. We saw the visualization possibilities as a big plus. Sofon can construct drawings of machines during configuration. The Sofon Sales Configurator (Internet Edition) also offered opportunities for the future. Apart from this, Sofon could work with various ERP systems. At the time, we had a link between Sofon and MFG/PRO but we switched to SAP quite a while ago, as this ERP system is standard throughout the Schmidt group. Now Sofon is to become the standard configurator for the whole group.”

3 What does Nido use Sofon for?

“We use Sofon within the group to configure products and to produce quotations. Nido mainly uses Sofon for the production side of things. We put together machines using a question-and-answer process. This eventually results in an error-free, complete bill of material. This bill of material is sent on directly to SAP. Sofon is also used to generate quotations. In the past it took us more than an hour to produce a quotation and details were easily missed. Now Sofon doesn't let us forget anything and a quotation can be made in 15 minutes.”

4 Has Nido realized any special applications in Sofon?

“Yes, with Sofon we can easily calculate how much weight an axle can bear. If a spreader or a sprayer is placed on a vehicle, the axles often have to bear a weight of a few tons. With Sofon, we can automatically calculate how the weight should be divided over the four axles. For this, we input vehicle and spreader data in Sofon. If the load is too great, Sofon will tell you that another type of spreader is called for. In this way, combinations are never overloaded when they go out on the road.”

5 Does Sofon meet your needs?

“We really liked Sofon from the very beginning. Now we don't want to be without it. Our ultimate goal is for all our sister firms to work with Sofon. Sales people will then be able to configure our products all over the world. This will improve speed and efficiency and new sales people will then be trained far more quickly. If a new employee knows nothing about our spreaders, he can familiarize himself with the product line using Sofon. This is important for our continuity. In the future we want to look at Sofon's CRM system, the Sales Organizer. At the moment our group works with various CRM systems, but we would like to get just one good replacement for all of them.” ■

ASEP generates error-free, uniform quotations in no time

Thanks to Sofon our quotation cycle time went down from 1.5 weeks to 1.5 minutes

Piet Bekkers

Erik Poliste

Martie Heijnen

Mark Verhoogh

Case

ASEP B.V. is a manufacturer and supplier of standard and client-specific products (specials) for the oil and gas industry. This includes advanced winching systems that meet the strictest requirements in the area of safety and company security. ASEP has branches in the Netherlands, the United States, the United Kingdom, the United Arab Emirates, Australia, Singapore, Russia, Malaysia and China. ASEP uses Sofon's standard software worldwide and has seen wonderful results since. Together with Martie Heijnen (Global Accounts Director), Piet Bekkers (Project Manager), Erik Poliste (Lead Sales Application Engineer) and Mark Verhoogh (Sales Application Engineer) we take a look at these changes.

Optimizing quotation process

ASEP traditionally worked according to the principle of engineer-to-order. However, they wanted more standardization. Apart from that, ASEP wanted to optimize the whole quotation process. Heijnen: "We wanted to make it possible for our sales people at home and abroad to produce quotations independently. That would bring us some time savings." Poliste explains: "Salesmen at our foreign branches were not able to produce quotations, rather all quotes were made in the Netherlands. Because of the time difference and the difficulty of working a quotation out by hand, it often took at least 1.5 weeks for a client to receive a quotation. It was clear that this was taking too long." ASEP then started looking for a system that could solve these problems. Bekkers: "We looked at various solutions. We wanted a client-directed system with professional output. The configurator in our ERP package and custom-made software did not meet our requirements. But Sofon offered us everything we were searching for."

Implementation

Implementation at ASEP went well. Bekkers: "Before we purchased Sofon, we had already started a process of standardization, but Sofon accelerated the process. We had a clear idea of what we wanted to realize within a certain time and with the available man power. All the steps, tasks and responsibilities were mapped-out beforehand." Verhoogh adds: "Erik Poliste and I were responsible for storing product knowledge in Sofon. We started by gathering and storing both our own knowledge and that of colleagues. Now various branches supply their own input concerning, for example, changes in products. After that Erik Poliste or I input the information in Sofon, so it can be shared with the rest of the world. However, all our branches remain responsible for the correctness of the information they supply. This job is taken very seriously." It is clear that ASEP has included their staff in every step of the process. Heijnen: "The introduction of Sofon was a big change for many: sales staff were not used to making their own quotations. We have created support by asking for input from staff and then actually using what they gave us."

Quotation cycle time drastically decreased

ASEP has achieved measurable results using Sofon. Poliste explains: "Previously it cost 1.5 weeks to produce a quotation. These days we only need 1.5 minutes. I show people this with a demo at the beginning of our training sessions. I go through the configuration and generate a quotation, with an hourglass beside me. Our sales staff reacted very enthusiastically and were eager to work with Sofon. Now, sales staff at home and abroad have Sofon on their laptops. They always have the information they need with them." Heijnen adds: "Sales people can produce quotations anywhere: at the office, at the airport, at home or on location with a client. This saves a lot of cycle time. Especially now our foreign branches produce their quotations independently."

Professional, error-free quotations with realistic products

Quotations are now not only produced more quickly, but the risk of error has become much smaller. Poliste: "Previously we made quotations from an Excel sheet, which included all the parts that make up our products. Based on personal knowledge, a selection of these parts was made. In this way, we sometimes offered products that we actually did not or could not make. Now the logic of connected parts is stored in Sofon. You go through a question-and-answer set up, which already contains certain defaults and exclusions. Now, every configured product is actually and realistically possible to make." Heijnen adds: "Then a professional quotation is produced, which looks much better than it would have in the past. Apart from that, quotations are uniform throughout the whole ASEP organization. Previously, two quotations for the same product could look totally different. Even the price could vary. Thankfully, that is no longer possible."

Communication between Sales and Engineering improved

Sofon has improved communication and understanding between the Sales and Engineering departments. Poliste: "Because they are using Sofon, Engineering knows that Sales will only offer products that can actually be made, and Sales always knows about changes to products in time. That creates trust." ASEP also gets positive reactions from customers. Heijnen: "The best example is from a former employee of ASEP who is now a customer. The former employee used to produce quotations the old way and was now confronted with Sofon. He immediately wanted to know why we hadn't purchased Sofon years ago. He would have loved to work with it as we also enjoy it very much. We have a lot of plans with Sofon. The assessment of Sofon's CRM package – the Sales Organizer – is on our calendars." ■

What did ASEP achieve with Sofon?

- Speeding up of standardization process
- Quotation process improved and optimized
- Quotation cycle time decreased from 1.5 weeks to 1.5 minutes
- Professional, error-free and uniform quotations
- Sales people at home and abroad can produce quotations anytime and anywhere
- Knowledge is stored and useful
- Each configured product is possible to make
- Communication between Engineering and Sales has improved

Egbert Harberink

Jan Brouwer

Willem den Hoed

Sofon is a standard software package, but feels like it was developed especially for us

Connected

Sofon, PDM and ERP: a seamless whole at Drent Goebel

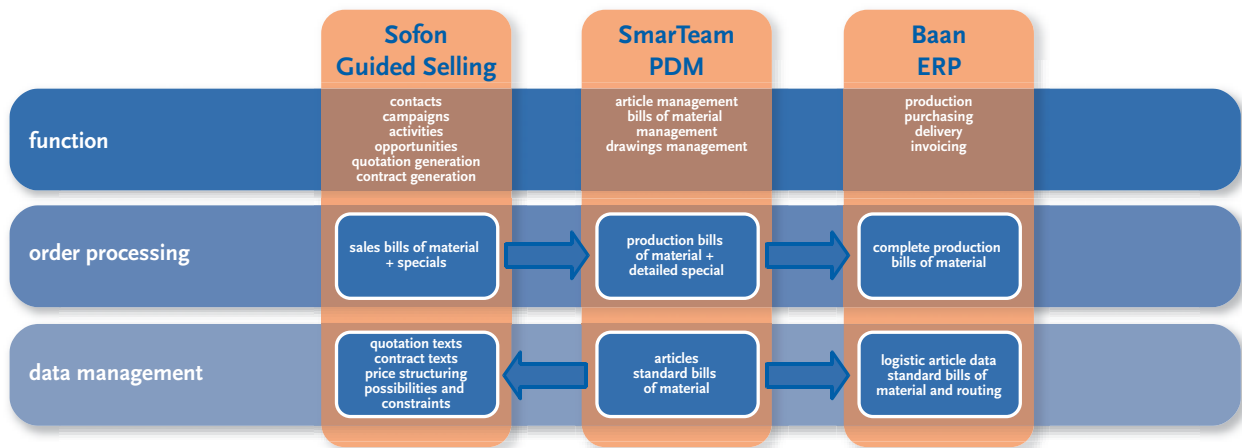
Drent Goebel produces unique rotation web offset printing presses and is a real trendsetter in the market. Drent Goebel is ahead of the game in the area of printing flexible packaging, labels and cardboard. The printing press manufacturer also targets various other markets, including printing banknotes. Drent Goebel needed a system with which they could quickly and accurately produce attractive quotations and contracts. In addition, they wanted a connection to their PDM and ERP system. Drent Goebel found the solution in Sofon. We look at the results achieved with Jan Brouwer (manager sales office), Willem den Hoed (project & ICT manager) and Egbert Harberink (special projects).

Quotations more and more important

Drent Goebel realized that quotations were becoming more and more important in the process of making customers an offer. Brouwer explains: "We found that our quotations were not attractive or clear enough to give the right kind of overview. With this complex material, the client wants a clear overview of what was precisely offered and agreed to." The quest for a system that could offer a solution began. Brouwer: "Sofon was the only company to meet all our conditions; Sofon had the possibility of making a connection to our Baan ERP package and was easy to maintain. During the implementation I collected knowledge and stored it in Sofon. In this way, we organized the question-answer set up that sales staff go through when configuring a printing press."

Speed

Now all the necessary knowledge has been made available in Sofon, Drent Goebel needs less time to produce a quotation. The quotation cycle time is now one day or a few days instead of weeks. A standard quotation can even be produced in one



hour. Brouwer: “A sales person can go directly to a customer with a nice-looking and comprehensive quotation. Many prospects are amazed when we send them a professional, correct and complete quotation within 24 hours. We were pleased to hear this as this was our goal; we wanted to make this kind of complete quotation – including sales conditions – so that clients would immediately know what we could offer. A signed quotation then also immediately means a complete order. We distinguish ourselves from the competition with this.”

Sales Organizer

Sofon’s CRM module – the Sales Organizer – is also in use at Drent Goebel. Brouwer: “Our staff was enthusiastic about the Proposal Organizer. We were looking for a complementary CRM package and Sofon was the most logical choice.” Harberink explains: “We have organized the Sales Organizer completely to our own convenience. We now have good insight into pending quotations, but we can also produce forecasting reports, plan service call appointments, calculate probabilities for our opportunities and organize marketing campaigns. For example, we use the Sales Organizer when we want to send out a mailing; we select the contacts we want to target and the mailing can then be sent out on the same day.”

PDM and ERP

Drent Goebel makes use of the SmarTeam PDM system for the maintenance of product data, bills of material and purchasing texts. In addition, drawings made in the CAD system Solid Works are available in the PDM system. Den Hoed explains: “All the data we maintain can be consulted on the internet by the people who install and maintain our systems all over the world. Adjustments made in the PDM system are automatically processed in the Baan IV ERP system.” Initially, Drent Goebel made use of a link between Sofon and Baan IV. For all machines sold using Sofon, a client-specific bill of material was produced and made available in Baan. Den Hoed continues: “However, we wanted to store the bills of material generated in Sofon in PDM, so that all relevant data would be available in PDM, both the standard bills of material and the client-specific bills of material. This goal has now been achieved by transferring the bills of material for all machines from Sofon to PDM via an automatic interface. Our machines have been standardized as much as possible in the last few years by producing them as modules. This makes it possible to offer complete machines in Sofon by way of a number of modules. For every machine sold, a bill of material is put into PDM at the module level by Sofon. After that, PDM transfers the complete production bill of material (the modules with the underlying bill of material level) to ERP.

Pre-engineered modules (PEMs)

Drent Goebel customers regularly have specific demands that cannot be met by the standard modules. Den Hoed: “Sofon

provides for this with pre-engineered modules (PEMs). For every PEM, the sales department requests a description and a price from Engineering. These are then added to the quotation. After the order, PEMs are worked out in PDM in detail for production, so that the bills of material transferred from PDM to ERP are complete. PEMs also relevant to future customers are processed in the Sofon models so that these can be offered within the standard modules. In this way, Sofon, PDM and ERP become a seamless whole with which every user in our company can be supported.”

Sofon: So Fun

It is clear that Drent Goebel supports many different processes with Sofon. “Sofon just gives us a lot of possibilities”, says Harberink. “We bought a standard package, but it can behave like it was customized especially for us. If the staff wants adjustments, we can easily take care of them in Sofon. Because of these adjustments, it sometimes feels like Sofon was written especially for us and it still works after further updates. This is often not the case in actual customized software. We actually call Sofon *So Fun* in our company because we enjoy working with it so much.” ■

What did Drent Goebel achieve with Sofon?

Thanks to the seamless integration of PDM and ERP:

- Error-free exchange of article and bills of material data between systems
- Control of the whole process for ‘specials’ from sale to installation
- Better cooperation between sales, engineering and production
- Machines sold using Sofon are automatically stored in PDM

Advantages for sales:

- Quotation cycle time decreased from weeks to hours or days
- Generation of professional, complete and correct quotations
- Insight into all quotations pending and the possibility of calculating proposal win rates
- Training time for new staff was shortened due to the storing of product knowledge
- Complete information on the sales situation per market, country and buyer

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:



Erbi supplies and manufactures high quality kitchen counters, table tops and work benches. They also make special interior decoration and exterior applications on a project basis. These products are produced and supplied from Alphen aan den Rijn (NL) and sold mainly in the Benelux and Germany. About 180 people are employed by Erbi. Their kitchen counters are available in 800 kitchen centers in the Netherlands. Erbi has chosen to optimize their sales office, order processing procedures and website (to digitally order kitchen counters) with Sofon.

veenman



Veenman is a supplier of printing systems, with experience in document management, digital solutions and process optimization. This specialist in document automation recently decided to purchase the Sofon Sales Organizer, Sofon's CRM module. The Sales Organizer will be used by more than 160 employees, divided over various branches. Veenman was already a user of Sofon Proposal Organizer, with which they produce error-free, professional and uniform sales documents.



DIAMOND

OVOPRO

EGG PROCESSING PERFECTION

Diamond and Ovopro – located in Farmington Hills, Michigan, USA – are both part of FPS Food Processing Systems. Diamond manufactures and sells egg-sorting and egg-packaging machines, and Ovopro supplies machines to break eggs and separate egg whites from egg yolks. Diamond and Ovopro will be using both Sofon Sales Organizer to streamline their sales process, and Sofon Proposal Organizer to support their quotation process.

Coming Sofon Seminar

This spring, Sofon is again organizing a seminar. This time the afternoon event has the theme of 'Selling more in bad times – No concession to the recession'. Discover how you can come out of this recession stronger and more professional and register for our seminar on March 24.

February to
May

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. Would you like to be present at any of these? Let us know via info@sofon.com. We will send you an invitation.

24 March 2009

Sofon Seminar – Vught (NL)

26 March 2009

CRM Innovation Event – Arnhem (NL)
Contribution Sofon: presentation by a Sofon customer

12 May 2009

Sofon Seminar – Nijkerk (NL)

Sofon

Guided Selling

Sofon is the supplier of sales support software under the name Sofon Guided Selling. With Sofon, quotes, contracts, orders and other sales documents are put together simply, quickly and without error. 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.

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