

Sofon news

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An Expert speaks out: Velopa supplies street furniture, playground equipment and coverings for public spaces. With Sofon, Velopa was able to achieve substantial improvements and efficiencies in their quotation cycle time while also greatly reducing errors.

Business Case: Bollegraaf Recycling Machinery is a global supplier of machines for the recycling industry. Bollegraaf uses Sofon Guided Selling for the configuration, calculation and generation of sales documents. Bollegraaf has benefited so greatly from Sofon that there are now plans to deploy it to their sister companies as well.

Sofon Connected: JéWéRet is a European wholesaler and manufacturer of mainly wood-related Do It Yourself (DIY) products. JéWéRet uses Sofon for order entry for their Sales Office and for quotation and order generation for their dealers, the DIY stores. Sofon also plays a big part in the managing of ERP and the CNC machines, so that the exact storage cabinet the consumer has put together in the DIY Store is actually made.

Harry Buter Bollegraaf

Willy Keller Bollegraaf

Sofon offers
us flexibility in
a constantly
changing market



Rhodan Mulder of Velopa
A fervent 'Sofon User'

.....
If you can read, you can produce a quotation with Sofon.

SofonNews the magazine of **Sofon**
Guided selling

3 **An Expert speaks out**

An interview with Rhodan Mulder of Velopa (supplier of street furniture, playground equipment and coverings). The coverings department uses Sofon to generate calculations, configurations, bills of materials and quotations. Velopa likes Sofon so much that they are planning to roll-out Sofon in their street furniture and playground equipment departments.

4 **Business Case**

5 Bollegraaf Recycling Machinery manufactures machines for the recycling industry. Quotations can consist of many different combinations of a variety of products. A large project can easily consist of more than 100 different products. However, Bollegraaf has been able to handle this complexity with Sofon. Sofon has been able to contribute to the standardization process yet also offers Bollegraaf enough flexibility to the day to day operations in a constantly changing marketplace.

6 **Sofon Connected**

7 JéWéRet (European wholesaler and manufacturer of mainly wood-related DIY products) uses Sofon in their Sales Office and at their dealers: the DIY stores. The consumer can specify the exact dimensions of a storage cabinet they require and Sofon allows them to assess a quotation and visualization of that cabinet in real-time. Once the right storage cabinet has been configured to the consumers specifications, the bill of materials is automatically generated in Sofon and transferred to the companies ERP system. Because the coordinates, parts and prices are all calculated in Sofon, JéWéRet can be assured that there are no surprises when it comes time to build the customers specified cabinets.

8 **Calendar – New clients**

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Real businesses are not dissuaded by negative newspaper headlines. Instead, they are always searching for a better and smarter way to do things. To be smarter and faster than competitors pays even more in times of economic challenges. If everyone is growing, it's not so hard to grow along with them. Growing in a time when the economy seems to be against you is harder to do. We are happy to reach out a helping hand.

Sofon has given many businesses the edge, making them more capable of meeting their clients' needs and desires and also allowing them to do it faster and better. With Sofon, our clients produce quotations in a fraction of the time that it used to take. That's important, because in a down market, many companies have found that they need to produce a larger volume of quotations to achieve the same number of orders.

Besides making quotation generation faster, Sofon also ensures that the content of quotations is accurate, that prices offered are correct and the contractual conditions are in order. This means that the cost of inaccurate quotations are dramatically reduced because salesmen and distributors simply can no longer offer products that are impossible to produce.

In this way, Sofon contributes to a significant improvement in competitiveness. In this edition, read about which advantages Velopa, Bollegraaf and JéWéRet have realized by choosing Sofon Guided Selling.

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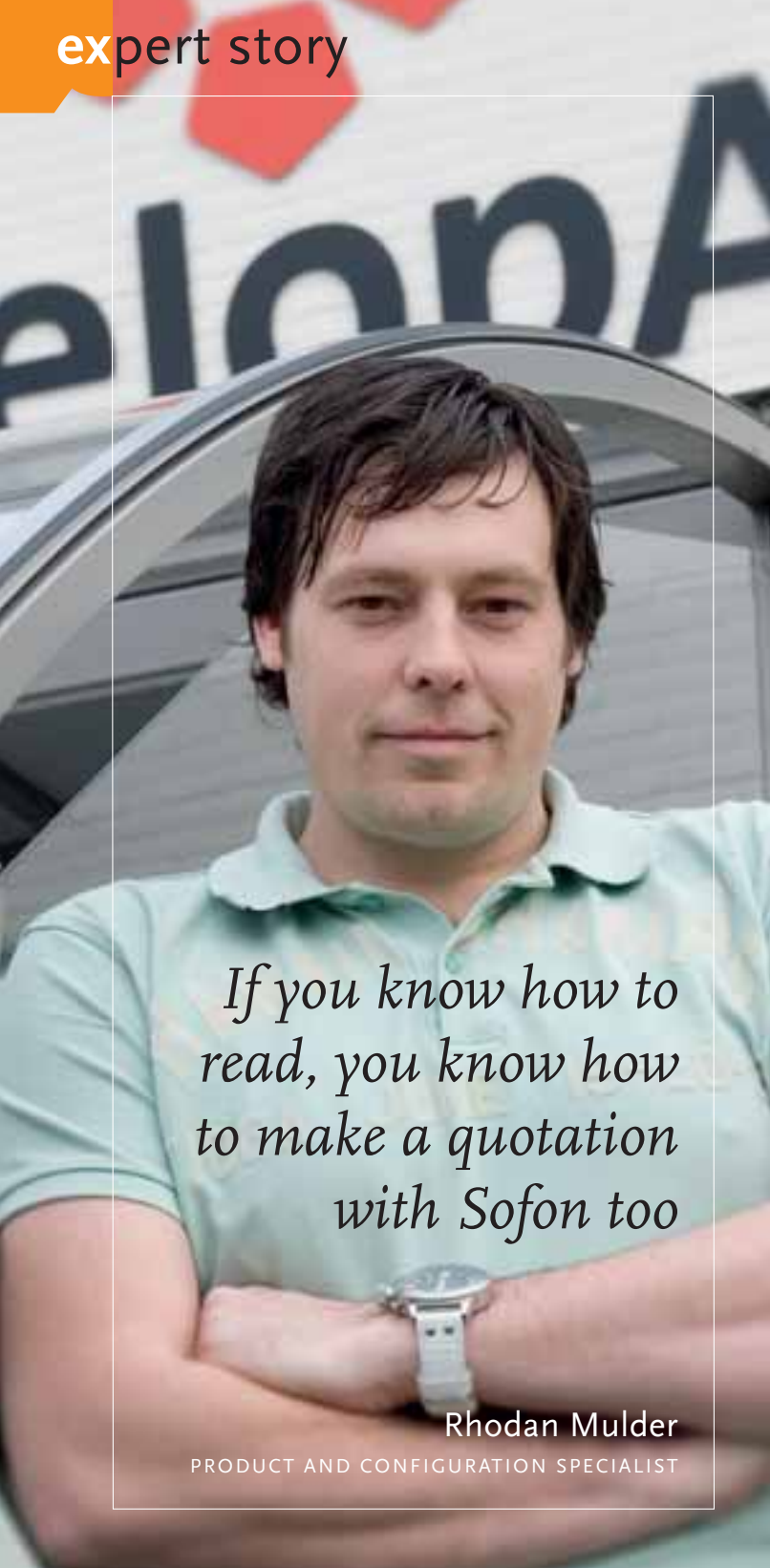
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If you know how to read, you know how to make a quotation with Sofon too

Rhodan Mulder

PRODUCT AND CONFIGURATION SPECIALIST

Name: Rhodan Mulder
Job description: Product and configuration specialist
Company: Velopa
Product: Supplier of street furniture, playground equipment, coverings. Market leader in Benelux.

5 questions for a Sofon User

1 What is Velopa using Sofon for?

“We supply street furniture, playground equipment and coverings for public spaces. We use Sofon to configure the coverings. I have integrated our quotation models into Sofon together with a colleague. We both had the product knowledge we needed, so we had a firm base to create these models, though I myself didn’t have an IT-background. I was, however, highly interested in learning how to model. And it seems that this has been bearing fruit since we heard from

our colleagues that the question-and-answer design of Sofon is built up logically. We also hear from our customers regularly that our quotations are clear, well-specified and have a professional look and feel.”

2 What was the situation like before Sofon?

“Prior to Sofon we were using Excel sheets which were made up of as much as twenty pages. On them we could fill in lots of data: length, width, height, sort of material, type of base... Then we had to convert these data to a text file. We used a standard text block in Word in which we could fill in prices and calculations. So you really had to know what you were doing because an error could be easily made. Apart from this, the making of a bill of materials turned out to be a bottleneck. We had to do it manually and one can see that there were many possibilities for errors in such a situation.”

3 What is the situation like with Sofon?

“Nowadays we use the question-and-answer design of Sofon to configure products and generate quotations. Internally we say to each other: ‘If you know how to read, you know how to make a quotation with Sofon’. Indeed, it’s that simple: thanks to Sofon everybody knows what questions have to be answered and what the possibilities and impossibilities are. This stretches so far that a new employee is already able to make a standard quotation after just a day or two. This doesn’t mean that he or she is automatically a product expert, but rather because of the way Sofon guides the user through the configuration, they can effortlessly build a quotation as if they were. The passing of product knowledge happens much faster as well. With Sofon a new co-worker has a training period of about one month to get to know our products, whereas in the past this took 12 to 18 months.”

4 What more did Velopa gain by using Sofon?

“Besides the shorter training period, Sofon allowed us to respond better to the changes our customers are asking for. Changing things in Sofon is quite simple. We also greatly improved on our quotation cycle time. In the past it took us thirty to forty five minutes to generate a quotation and now we have a new one in less than a few minutes. Quotations are complete, error-free, contain a cover sheet, specification sheet, delivery conditions and an assembly checklist the buyer has to fill in. Best of all, we don’t have to create the bill of materials by hand anymore when a quotation becomes an order. Because the BOM is created during the quote configuration, it is automatically transferred to our ERP system Microsoft Dynamics AX when it becomes an order.”

5 What will the future bring to Velopa and Sofon?

“Sofon has been successfully used at our coverings department for four years now. That’s why we intend to roll Sofon out to the playground equipment and street furniture departments. When these departments start working with Sofon as well, we expect to see decreasing errors and an easier process to make combined quotations. We would also like to introduce Sofon to our Field Sales Department and eventually have Sofon be able to do the visualization drawings of the products during the configuration.” ■

*Sofon offers us flexibility in
a constantly changing market*

Harry Buter

Willy Keller



Case

Bollegraaf easily configures complex products with Sofon

Bollegraaf Recycling Machinery is a global supplier of machines for the recycling industry. Its product portfolio includes balers, sorting systems, shredders, conveyor belts, star screens and reel splitters. Bollegraaf uses Sofon Guided Selling to configure, calculate and generate sales documents for these machines. Harry Buter (IT-manager) and Willy Keller (Head of the Internal Sales Department) explain their choice of Sofon and discuss the implementation and obtained results.

From Excel to Sofon

In the past Bollegraaf used a customized calculations application built in Excel. The company, however, met the limitations of this application with the growing complexity of recycling installations. Keller: "At a certain point Excel just couldn't handle the amount of data we required. The application jammed with the risk of losing part of your data, which of course was quite annoying and not a viable business option. However, what was even more concerning was that different people could produce different calculations for the same product." Buter adds: "When the Excel calculation was completed it had to be converted into a Word document. This took a substantial amount of time and because it had to be done manually, there was always a chance of mistakes, and the risk of us selling combinations that can't be produced, was unacceptably high." Excel's limitations gave Bollegraaf a reason to search for a dedicated sales support system. Bollegraaf opted for a system that could handle configurations and calculations uniformly. Keller: "Besides that we wanted to improve standardization, build bills of materials during the configuration, generate sales documents and get a connection to our ERP package. Sofon could fulfil all our wishes."

Implementation

Bollegraaf has almost its complete supplies program integrated into Sofon along with the products of their sister companies and suppliers that are used in the installations. Buter: "I started importing all relevant product knowledge involving one of our products. Based on this model, the Internal Sales Department then made their quotations. This gave us the opportunity to gain some experience, before I would start importing the more complex products." The complexity of the combinations rests particularly in the amount of different parts. Keller explains: "The combinations we supply are real projects. A large project may contain more than a hundred different products. These installations are built with more or less standard products, but these standard products will have to fit into a larger entity. So we have to make adjustments per customer involving dimensions, speed, the fabric on the belt... This is what makes it all so complex." These complexities have been overcome with Sofon. Keller: "Now that the product knowledge is integrated into Sofon we are able to configure products on the basis of a question-and-answer set-up. These questions are put in a logical order in which defaults and exclusions are used. This phrasing already leads to the solution, enabling us to create a flexible model."

All goals realized

Sofon has been live for some time at Bollegraaf and all of the original goals have been realized. Buter: "The linking to our ERP

system MS Dynamics AX works seamlessly. All info is directly available when a sales order is created. This information is distributed to our ERP system through Sofon and we are immediately able to start purchasing and production." Also Bollegraaf's quotations look far better than before. Keller: "When we produced the first offers with Sofon we received many positive reactions from our existing customers. They thought that the offers looked more professional and complete. That's what we like to hear. One is entitled to expect a good quotation when installations will cost a couple of hundred thousands or even millions of euros." At the moment Bollegraaf makes consistent offers in several languages: Dutch, English, German, French and Spanish. Buter: "Sofon contains standard texts. This allows us for instance to convert a Spanish quotation into a Dutch with just one key stroke – proving quite handy when you don't speak Spanish. You will still know exactly what is offered."

Flexibility

Bollegraaf's quotations did not only improve on content and lay out, Bollegraaf also managed to save time during the quotation process. Buter: "Questions are less often forgotten, the lay out is immediately correct and mistakes are prevented. If we still had to produce our quotations the old way, everything would get jammed internally. Our sister companies Lubo and Bollegraaf Logistics are also positive about Sofon: they saw the results we achieved. So we would like to implement Sofon there, too. We also plan to use Sofon internally in a broader perspective. We want to generate the quotations from our Service Department with Sofon and CRM is also on the agenda. Sofon has enough flexibility to be usable in many directions, which is critical in a marketplace that is constantly changing." ■

What did Bollegraaf achieve with Sofon?

- Contribution to process of standardization
- Overcoming complexity of processes
- Seamless link to ERP
- Possibility to build bills of materials during configuration
- Time saving during quotation process
- Less control needed because quotations are immediately complete, consistent and error free
- Professional quotations in different languages
- Flexibility in a constantly changing market

Sofon determines measurements and CNC program selection at the start of the quotation process

Paul de Jager

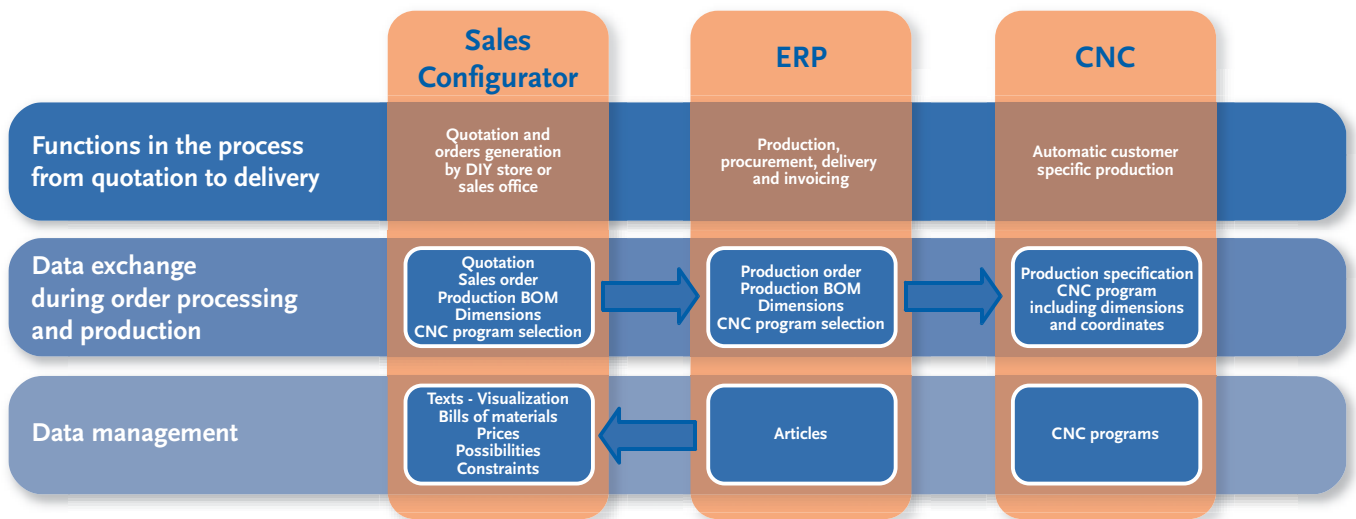
Connected

Sofon streamlines the process from quotation to finished product at JéWéRet

JéWÉRET is a European wholesaler and manufacturer of mainly wood-related Do It Yourself (DIY) products for application in home and other interiors. Sofon Guided Selling is used to configure the cabinet and storage systems of the brands Stanley, Raffito and Storemax. JéWÉRET not only uses Sofon in house at their Internal Sales Department for order entry, Sofon is also used for quotation and order generation by their distributors: DIY stores. This enables buyers to order a storage cabinet at the DIY store and immediately configure it to their wishes and needs on site after which they can

assess the quotation and visualization of the product they just built. When the quotation is accepted a bill of materials generated by Sofon is automatically transferred to their ERP system. Sofon also calculates and transfers the coordinates needed to direct the CNC machines at the same time. In this way, JéWéRet ensures that the production line delivers exactly the storage cabinet that the buyer configured at the DIY store. Paul de Jager (IT Manager) explains this process and its advantages.

JéWéRet's dealers configure 80,000 doors and 15,000 closet interiors annually with Sofon



Sofon in the DIY market

JéWéRet's dealers – the DIY shops – use Sofon to configure cabinet and storage systems. Paul de Jager explains: “Our dealers configure closets for the brands Stanley, Raffito and Storemax together with the buyers in the DIY stores. After this the DIY employee can hand over the quotation generated and the visualization of that closet to the buyer. If the buyer accepts the quotation, it becomes an order. The employee changes the status in Sofon and then Sofon will automatically send an e-mail with this information to the inbox of the Internal Sales Department. An automated process scans and verifies these e-mails after which the order is processed by the Sales Department. Then we have a built-in buffer period of 24 hours. During this period our dealers have the opportunity to cancel orders in case the buyer has second thoughts or changes are made.”

Orders complete for production

After the buffer period, the order is planned for production and glass, mirrors and doors will be purchased according to the specifications. De Jager: “Based on the configuration Sofon produces a manual for the buyer and the bill of materials automatically. This bill of materials is so complete that it can be transferred directly to production through our ERP system. At the moment we are still working with custom-made ERP, but we will switch to MS Dynamics AX 2009. We will use this transfer period to do a number of efficiency improvements. We for instance started working based on the Just in Time (JIT) process to reduce temporary stocks and limit risks.”

CNC controlled machines

When the orders have been planned and the purchases are delivered, production starts. De Jager: “All possible sawing and drilling programs and the parameters needed are stored in a Sofon model. Based on these specifications Sofon is able to determine sizes and choice of program automatically. This even starts at the beginning of the ordering process. Sofon calculates the exact XY coordinates of for instance the drilling positions. These specifications become part of the bar code of each production order slip. Then this bar code is scanned at the shop floor after which the specifications – as sawing and drilling coordinates – are transferred to the machine. Then sawing and drilling will start. As soon as the production route is completed the products are reported finished. This is also done with the help of the bar code being scanned.” In this manner annually 30,000 customer specified orders for

doors (totaling 80,000 doors) and 15,000 closet interiors are processed, consisting of 45,000 modules.

Further automation

At the moment JéWéRet still generates production order slips with a bar code but this is just a temporary solution. “We want to stop running through our company with physical slips. Every workstation will have to have industrial touch-screen PC's on which the operator can select his order. After the selection the correct program choice and parameters will be loaded. So we are continuously improving our process and Sofon means a great contribution.” ■



Advantages of all systems integration:

- Minimization manual input; less input errors made
- No double input
- Dealer processes complete ordering process
- Sales order is immediately production order
- Less errors in specifications
- Less errors in production
- Control and optimization of total production process
- Less manpower because of works automation

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:

MOBA Moba is the world's largest producer of egg-sorting and packaging machines. The company is located in Barneveld, the birthplace of Dutch egg production. At this location development, design and production of all Moba machines takes place. Moba recently decided to start using the Sofon Sales Organizer, Sofon's CRM module. Moba was already a user of the Sofon Proposal Organizer. At both the head office in Barneveld and the foreign sales offices, Moba is producing quotations for machines in many different languages.

UNITECH UNITECH supplies subsea production and workover control systems as well as services to the offshore industry. Unitech has offices in the Netherlands (Amsterdam), the United States of America, Norway and Singapore. UNITECH offers a wide range of total systems to meet their customers requirements. UNITECH has a vast reference list including many North Sea projects (mostly in the Norwegian sector), projects in the Gulf of Mexico, Asia and West Africa. UNITECH will implement Sofon Guided Selling to support their quotation and calculation process.

Keep up-to-date on what's happening with Sofon

Sofon is pleased to keep you up-to-date on developments in Guided Selling. We organize seminars a few times a year and publish Sofon News every quarter. If you would like to receive the electronic versions of these mailings, please let us know. Digital photo frames will be raffled among the electronic subscribers. Every 50th subscriber will receive a digital photo frame as a nice decoration for their desk. You can subscribe at our website www.sofon.com



June 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:

15 October 2009

**Sofon Seminar –
Castle Maurick in
Vught (NL)**

Martie Heijnen and Piet Bekkers speak on behalf of Sofon customer ASEP

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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