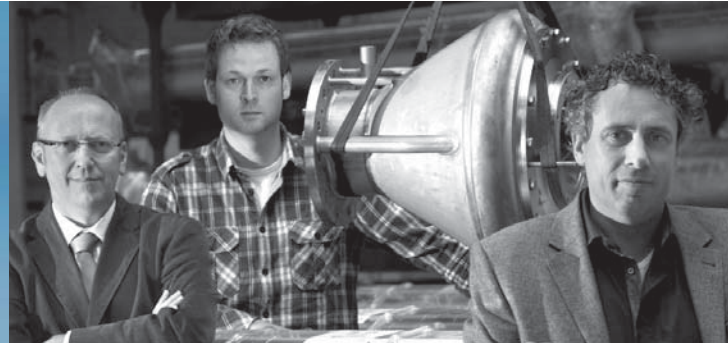




“Knowledge safeguarding leads to greater standardization within MarFlex”



f.l.t.r. Vincent Snels ICT MANAGER, Jeroen Heijndijk ENGINEERING/ R&D MANAGER, Michael Smits DIRECTOR-COO

What do you do if your sales representatives require detailed knowledge to make a quotation? That was the challenge facing MarFlex, a developer and manufacturer of electrical deep well pumps for the shipping and offshore industries. The abundance of options and combinations made it difficult for the sales staff to provide an accurate quotation quickly. They often needed the help of the Engineering department. But, these days, Engineering is no longer involved in 90% of quotations that are made. Michael Smits (Director-COO), Jeroen Heijndijk (Engineering/ R&D Manager) and Vincent Snels (ICT Manager) explain the role Sofon played in this improvement.

Sales staff makes 90% of quotations without the help of Engineering

GUIDANCE

The sales staff at MarFlex required quite a bit of guidance in selecting the right options and variants. According to Heijndijk, “Our sales people had the right product knowledge, but they are not exactly technically savvy. Since we have a large number of options and variants, it sometimes happened that a sales representative combined the wrong items, or that the Engineering department had to be brought in to help prepare the quotation, resulting in a longer quotation cycle time.”

FOCUS ON OWN TASKS

MarFlex wanted to make technical knowledge available to its Sales department. Smits explains, “This would allow Sales and Engineering each to focus more on their own tasks. The sales staff could then create standard quotations without having to involve Engineering. And new sales representatives could easily be trained in this process.”

GUARANTEED RESULTS

The next step was to find a provider who could meet all of MarFlex’s needs. Snels adds, “We looked into the configurator in our ERP system, among other options. But we needed a mature

system that could deliver guaranteed results. Obviously, we didn’t want to take any unnecessary risks during the implementation process. Sofon turned out to be the best option for us.”

PROJECT TEAM

Sofon quotation software was purchased and implemented without any hiccups. Heijndijk explains, “We wanted to translate the technical knowledge of the Engineering department into a question-and-answer format for Sales. So we put together a project team, which then compiled and stored all technical knowledge.” Snels adds, “The team was assisted by a Sofon consultant who worked very well with our Engineering department. This led to fast results.”

MORE INSIGHT

A number of employees ended up leaving the company, resulting in several changes within the project team. Snels comments, “That’s something you try to avoid at all costs, since it often leads to delays. But Sofon dealt with this effectively and we lost very little time.” Smits adds, “This might very well have led to a better product. After all, the more people involved, the greater the insight and potential gain.”



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RIGHT COMBINATION

After an implementation time of six months, MarFlex went live with Sofon. Smits says, “Sales no longer requires the help of Engineering for 90% of quotations. The sales staff can now submit quotations with the correct specifications, simply by answering questions. If, for example, we want to offer a certain combination (pump, electric motor, fan diameter etc.), we simply enter the customer’s parameters into the Sofon software, such as the shut-off pressure and viscosity of the medium being pumped, and Sofon makes sure we do not make any errors and offer the correct combination.”

INEXPERIENCED SALES STAFF, HIGH-QUALITY QUOTATIONS

This knowledge safeguarding method has also made it possible for a relatively inexperienced sales team to make accurate quotations. Smits explains, “A new sales representative can now submit a quotation quickly and accurately – without the need for detailed knowledge.” Snels adds, “And if a sales representative is unable to answer a question in the questionnaire, he at least knows what question to ask a colleague.”

CONFIDENCE

MarFlex is extremely pleased with the results. Heijndijk comments, “Our quotations are of excellent quality, both in terms of contents and layout. They can be created quickly because they no longer require any typing.”

Snels adds, “Now that we work with Sofon, we realize just how much effort used to go into making a quotation in Word. We often simply copied text from old quotations. This meant spending time checking through the entire text to make sure we didn’t forget to change anything. But now we know... Sofon is always right! We no longer have to read through the text and can send it off with confidence.”

FEWER SPECIALS

Sofon has been received positively within MarFlex. Smits explains, “Our sales people now calculate within the standard. Fewer unnecessary specials are offered as a result. This is something the organization really appreciates. Sales are also very pleased with Sofon. They may have less flexibility now because they have to work within the standard, but the speed and quality of the quotation process more than makes up for this.”

FUTURE

MarFlex will be integrating a new product group into Sofon in the future. Smits explains, “It’s called NQZR. What makes this system unique is its integrated sensors which allow for continuously monitoring the pump. You can immediately see whether the pump requires maintenance, for instance. Our sister company is now also going to take a serious look at Sofon. The chances are good they will get the same great results!”

HOW DOES MARFLEX BENEFIT FROM SOFON?

- Knowledge safeguarding: when employees leave the company, their knowledge does not go with them
- Sales staff can utilize technical knowledge
- Sales and Engineering can focus on their own tasks: 90% of quotations are made without the involvement of Engineering
- Accurate quotations
- Improved quotation cycle time
- Shorter training time
- Fewer specials

