KINKELDER ®

Sofon
Guided Solutions

"AX and Sofon offer us more insight, thus enabling better steering"

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Kinkelder enjoys the advantages of integration between Microsoft Dynamics AX and Sofon

Kinkelder develops, manufactures and sells metal circular sawblades. The manufacturing of these saws takes place in the Netherlands and the Czech Republic. The other companies within the Kinkelder Group – located in the US, France, Belgium, England and Germany – take care of purchasing, sales and service. When Kinkelder needed a new ERP package, a good product configurator was absolutely necessary. Kinkelder saw the solution in the combination of Microsoft Dynamics AX and Sofon. Sjak Ponjée (Financial Director), Peter Kuipers (Application/Systems Management) and Robbert de Ligt (Application Management) explain why they chose this combination, how the integration is organized and what the results are.

IT COMPANY-WIDE

"The Kinkelder Group has grown considerably in the past years. Within Kinkelder there was a desire to manage IT for the whole company, uniformly and in a structured manner. This came at a good time for the branch in the Netherlands because they were running into the limits of the ERP system then in use. Ponjée: "We needed more specific management information and a better steering of operating processes. That was enough reason to start a search for a suitable successor."

COMBINATION ERP AND PRODUCT CONFIGURATOR

Kinkelder was not only looking for a new ERP package, but also for a product configurator. Ponjée explains: "It quickly became clear to us that product configurators within ERP systems have their limitations. This was confirmed by the Microsoft Dynamics AX implementation partner Pulse. Pulse advised us to use AX only for the ERP functionalities and not for product configuration. They advised us to use Sofon for product configuration. In practice we also found that Sofon has far more possibilities than the AX product configurator."

IMPLEMENTATION

During implementation, Sjak Ponjée himself started with Sofon model building: "As Financial Director I am responsible for Finance, Purchase and IT, and I added model building to that. Now Peter Kuipers does model building and Robbert de Ligt keeps the information up-to-date which is used by the models ." De Ligt adds: "We have modelled all our main products in Sofon Studio. This means that we have put all our knowledge of these products into a model. Sales people use these models to answer questions about the products and to configure them flawlessly."

FEATURES ADMINISTRATION

When a request for a product comes in, we first check whether the article has been configured before. Ponjée explains: "We do this in AX with the features administration. Here we enter a number of characteristics of the article in question. If a positive result emerges, the configuration has been produced before. In this way, we can easily re-use information from articles delivered previously." If the search in the features administration does not yield any results, then Kinkelder uses

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Sofon Proposal Organizer to configure the new product. Ponjée continues: "We add an order line to ERP, after which Sofon is automatically started to configure, for example, a saw blade."

MACHINE OPERATION

As soon as the configuration is completed, bills of materials and routings are handed over by Sofon to AX. Then the order can be delivered from stock or planned for production. Ponjée goes on: "Sofon also plays a role in the operation of the laser marking machine that is used to provide the saw blades with customer-specific information. This process works in the following way: different variables are defined in Sofon and sent on to AX. Based on these variables, AX supplies a combined order list. This combined order list contains a barcode. As soon as the barcode is scanned by the operator of the laser marking machine on the production floor, the sales order is picked up – containing the variables to direct the machine. After that, the laser marking machine adds a logo to the circular metal saw and the right diameter and thickness. This process now takes place automatically and flawlessly. Previously, the operator had to retype numbers from paper to activate the laser marking machine. A lot of mistakes used to be made with this. Incorrect retyping of the codes caused incorrect processing, for example, adding the wrong logos."

RECONFIGURATION

Kinkelder has realized more special applications in Sofon and AX. Kinkelder can also reconfigure products collectively. Kuipers explains: "If there is a change in a treatment or treatment time, we can put through this change for all articles in question. We call this reconfiguring. We don't need to do this manually. Using the 'reconfigure' button we can go through all the articles in a certain series from AX, so that routings or processing times are automatically adjusted, while the article number remains the same. We do this with a batch in AX that calls up Sofon."

SERVICE

At Kinkelder, Sofon is also used for service. Ponjée elucidates: "We made a service model in Sofon to configure the maintenance treatments that saw blades need. This can be, for example, sharpening or soldering. In our production space, we have an employee who works with Sofon and AX. This employee inputs sales orders and uses the service model to enter the characteristics of the saw blade. Then a production order is added to the sales order. In this way, the saws go into production and the necessary maintenance treatments are taken care of."

RESULTS

The combination of AX and Sofon has brought Kinkelder tangible results. Ponjée: "We now have more insight into stocks, margins, liquidities and our order portfolio. Because of this insight we can steer our business and make progress. We want to make further progress by rolling AX and Sofon out for our subsidiary companies. We also see possibilities for Sofon's Web Sales Configurator. Using that, our customers could put together products online."

WHAT DID KINKELDER ACHIEVE WITH AX AND SOFON?

- All product knowledge saved in models
- Re-use of existing configurations
- Generation of flawless bills of materials and routings
- Data integration with laser marking machine
- Collective reconfiguration
- Configuration of service processes, such as sharpening and soldering
- More insight into stocks, margins, liquidities and order portfolio

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