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CFO Markus Schalch

“Complete insight into the order flow”

The JENSEN-GROUP develops and produces client-specific solutions for heavy-duty laundries, from individual machines to complete lines and turnkey solutions. Originally from Denmark, with its head office and stock exchange listing in Belgium, the Group achieved a turnover of 318 million euros in 2016.

Previously, the JENSEN-GROUP sales offices used to record their activities themselves in Excel sheets from their locations all over the world. This meant that there was very little insight into sales performance at central and decentral levels. But then, four years ago, Sofon’s sales management solutions went live in the JENSEN-GROUP and the sales process became transparent. ‘Thanks to these tools, we now speak the same language all over the world,’ says CFO Markus Schalch.

NOT TRANSPARENT

Until four years ago, JENSEN had a strongly decentralized sales organization, consisting of independently operating sales offices in 16 countries. “Each office had its own Excel sheets with numerous variables,” Schalch explains. “As a result, they all recorded things in their own way and sometimes in their own language, such as which client had ordered which machines, systems and options, and with what delivery times, as well as the prices and costs; options and amounts which were difficult to keep up to date. It also meant that different versions of the same Excel sheets could easily exist, creating misunderstandings between management, sales and the manufacturing plants. At the

same time, we as JENSEN management had very limited insight into the current sales process. How many of which type of machine with which options had been offered by which office at what price, which tenders had been accepted and could be put in production – none of this was available and transparent.”

INVOLVE THE MOST CRITICAL PEOPLE

To obtain greater insight, JENSEN set out to find a sales management system and ultimately ended up at Sofon in Eindhoven. “Together with Sofon, we visited a client in Belgium: like us, an engineering company that had experienced the same problems as we had with a strongly decentralized sales organization before they bought the Sofon tools. That visit was the deciding factor for us. Once we had a complete picture of the functionalities and flexibility of the tools, we chose Sofon,” Schalch says.

In only one year, the software design of the tool was adapted to JENSEN’s sales process and rolled out worldwide: “It was very useful that the most critical sales and back office people were closely involved. They were given every freedom to comment on the design of the tools and how these tools could best support them.



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Ultimately, we got a software solution which closely reflects how our sales and back office people are expected to work. All these changes were strongly supported by our management”.

“We spent only six months designing and testing the tools extensively – to the bone – with all kinds of tender data from real, worldwide practice, until finally being rolled out in six months worldwide, including training for all the people who would be using the tools.

NO MORE DISCUSSION

JENSEN’s tenders are now drawn up in the exact same way all over the world, using exactly the same data available online. “If the client requests an extra discount, if they have wishes requiring specific engineering or if they choose a combination of options that results in a certain complexity, management must be involved. If you don’t have approval in such a case, you simply aren’t permitted to proceed with the tender process. This prevents us from developing something special for which standard solutions are already available, or from giving discounts unnecessarily. Thanks to these tools, we now speak the same

language all over the world.” And we mean that quite literally, Schalch says: “If a client requests a certain specification in Swedish, we can now translate that into English at the touch of a button. That also prevents misunderstandings.”

MORE INSIGHT THAN EXPECTED

The management now has the transparency it required to guide the multinational properly: “We now have complete and up to date insight into the order flow, specified according to type of machines, systems and options. We can also see the required outlay and the final margin we will have, as well as which office and which individual salesperson has achieved which orders over the past period. All of this information supports to plan the production capacity in advance. It also provides feedback to engineering by clearly showing which newly developed options are doing well and which aren’t. All in all, the Sofon tools offer us much more relevant management information than we previously expected.”

DELIGHTED

CFO Markus Schalch is convinced that the implementation of the Sofon tool has significantly contributed to the turnover

and profit growth of recent years, “because we’ve been able to issue so many more tenders with the same number of people.” As he explains, “It’s no coincidence that in the last three years, since we’ve all been using the tools, our turnover has risen by around a hundred million euros.”

But he is also very delighted with the implementation process: “I’ve been CFO here for ten years and there are not many IT projects that have been implemented without major problems or delays. Sofon is one of them”

TIPS FOR COLLEAGUES

Asked what tips he has for other CFOs, Schalch points to the early and close involvement of the “most critical back office and sales people” and the importance of appointing and involving an application manager from the start who has full responsibility for ensuring that the implementation delivers the right results. “And it’s also crucial that as management, you are very clear what management information you want and how you want to use it to streamline your processes and take decisions.”

