

“We can now expand our product range with very little effort”



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Montis designs and manufactures high-quality designer furniture – generally seating furniture. Leading designers and innovative production methods guarantee an “honest and efficient industrial product.” To be able to handle the extensive range of designer furniture, Montis utilizes an international sales network to both companies and consumers. For years now, Montis has focused on the upper segment of the design market as the targeted purchasers do not buy standard furniture. They put together their ‘own’ design furniture in a customer-specific manner. They do not choose a standard chair, but rather a chair by that designer, with those legs and seat, and upholstered in that color leather/fabric. The number of options is extensive, which in turn makes order processing very complex. To streamline that process, Montis implemented Sofon’s advanced sales configurator. Alice Jacobs-den Ouden and Wim Faro, both working in the business office, discuss what Sofon has meant to and done for their company over the past ten years.

Montis streamlines complex order process with Sofon

HISTORY

Montis already used to work with a product configurator. “While it’s true that the application was also integrated with the ERP system MFG/Pro, in practice, we were continuously confronted with limitations, particularly in the area of management. The configurator was opaque, not user-friendly – particularly if people had to change products or had to input new products – and was ultimately no longer supported. Those were the main reasons for us to look for a more powerful configurator,” says Jacobs. What requirements did the new configurator have to meet? “The main requirement was that integration with MFG/Pro had to be possible. Sofon was working on precisely this integration, so the decision was made that Sofon would streamline our product configuration,” Faro explains. “Sofon also satisfied the other requirements. Technical support was provided and the flexibility of the configurator was considerable. We required that flexibility to be able to modify existing products quickly and to enter new products in a much shorter time – often half the time as with the former solution. Moreover, the Sofon Sales Configurator was transparent and user-friendly, which

would enable time savings and hence greater return,” Jacobs adds.

PRODUCT RANGE

“During the implementation of Sofon, we built about 250 models within three weeks, which is improbably fast in the configuration world. Considering that our collection changes each year, we now have already built 700 models in Sofon. We went live with the Sofon Sales Configurator and Sofon Studio modules,” Jacobs explains. Using these modules, Montis is not focusing on the handling of quotations, in contrast to many other Sofon users. That is because the company does not use quotations, but rather uses price lists. As Jacobs explains, “The Sofon modules are utilized during the entry of sales orders to immediately configure the products, and thus to lay the foundation for the management. That is why the interface of the configurator, as well as the speed of the entry, is so important to us. In the past, we had to go through all 700 models when new types of fabrics or leather were added. This often took us several days to get through. We have now modified the models in such a way that all fabric and leather color are listed in tables.



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Now entering a fabric or leather color is a half-hour job.”

QUESTIONNAIRE

Montis uses Sofon Sales Configurator as follows: when a dealer wants to order furniture, a representative from the inside sales team enters the corresponding data. Faro explains, “By using a questionnaire format in Sofon, the dealer configures the ordered furniture: the selected fabric/leather color, the color, and the types of legs and seat. During configuration, working in the background, Sofon compiles a BOM and the corresponding routing. Both of these are sent to MFG/Pro. They form the basis for the further order handling.” Jacobs adds, “Each type of product has its own questionnaire. The business office produces all of the questionnaires in Sofon Studio, with the corresponding options, such as color and material. This working method promotes the flexibility and speed, but also the transparency and customer friendliness: the customer is shown the options and properties.”

DYNAMIC PRODUCT RANGE

Just over six months after the implementation of Sofon, Montis brought a number of new products to the market, including tables. This was not anticipated prior to the implementation. After a few minor

modifications to the Sofon interface that were required because the new products were manufactured externally, Montis could enter these new products quickly. As a result, the product range was considerably expanded. As Jacobs says, “We can now, with very little effort, enter completely new products in the logistics system by means of our internal sales department. If there proved to be a demand for these products, the products are then added permanently to the product range. An experiment like this would normally have demanded a major investment. Thanks to Sofon, we are able to define advantageous new product/market combinations.”

TRAINING PERIOD

According to Montis there are even more advantages. “The Sofon configurator is – in contrast to what people were used to – stable, and with its considerable user-friendliness, a shorter training period is required with Sofon for new employees. Moreover, the number of errors in the order processing and handling are lower than previously. In the 10 years that Sofon has been in use, we have used it to configure approximately 200,000 products, without any noteworthy issues,” explains Faro. In response to the question of whether Sofon satisfies Montis’ expectations, he responds with “Yes, absolutely.”

WHAT DID MONTIS ACHIEVE WITH SOFON?

- Entry of new products more flexible and faster
- Order processing more transparent and more customer friendly
- Shorter training time
- Greater user friendliness
- Order processing more accurate
- Order handling more accurate

