

# Whitepaper

WINNING QUOTATIONS

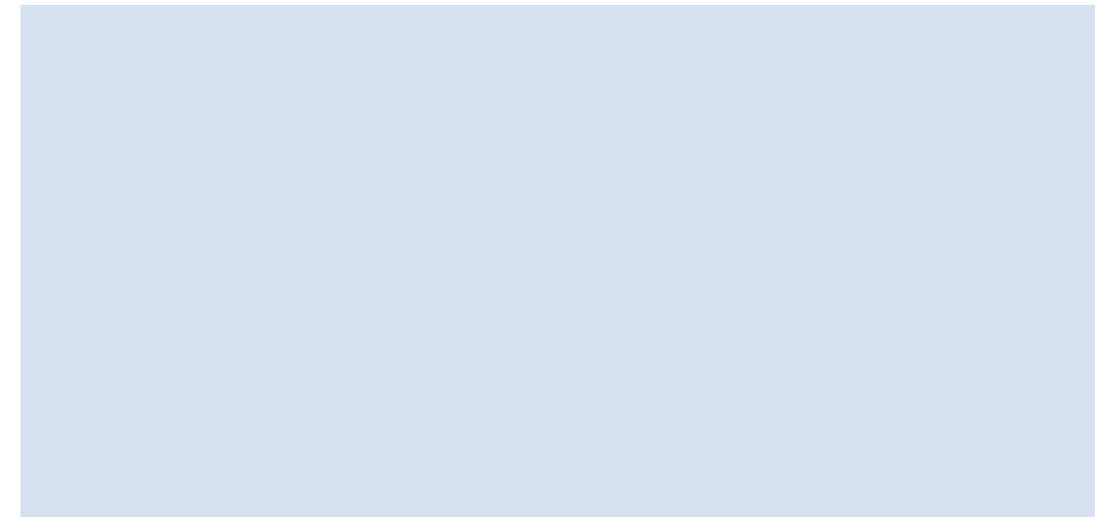
# Introduction: optimization of the quotation process

**Many companies find it hard to produce a good quotation quickly and accurately. Even though this is of crucial importance! The faster your customer receives an accurate and complete quotation, the more chance you have of closing the deal..**

When a potential customer requests a quotation from your business, he apparently wants your product. It is of course in your interest to send out a good quotation with as much speed as you can. In this way, you will make optimal use of the momentum available to you! But this is easier said than done. In practice, a few days could elapse between the request and your sending out the quotation in question. And now and then a quotation your company sends to a customer is faulty. There are a number of bottlenecks that could occur in the area of:

1. Speed
2. Quality

In the chapters ahead, you will find tips to speed-up and improve your quotation process. You will also be able to make WINNING QUOTATIONS!



# Speed

**Putting together a quotation usually costs a lot of time. Every customer has different needs and desires. And translating those needs and desires to the right product often means doing some background checking and research.**

## Quotation

In translating a client's needs and desires to text on paper you will:

- analyse customer requirements
- select, configure and calculate the correct solution
- generate the quotation
- approve the quotation (including your ability to supply what you are offering)

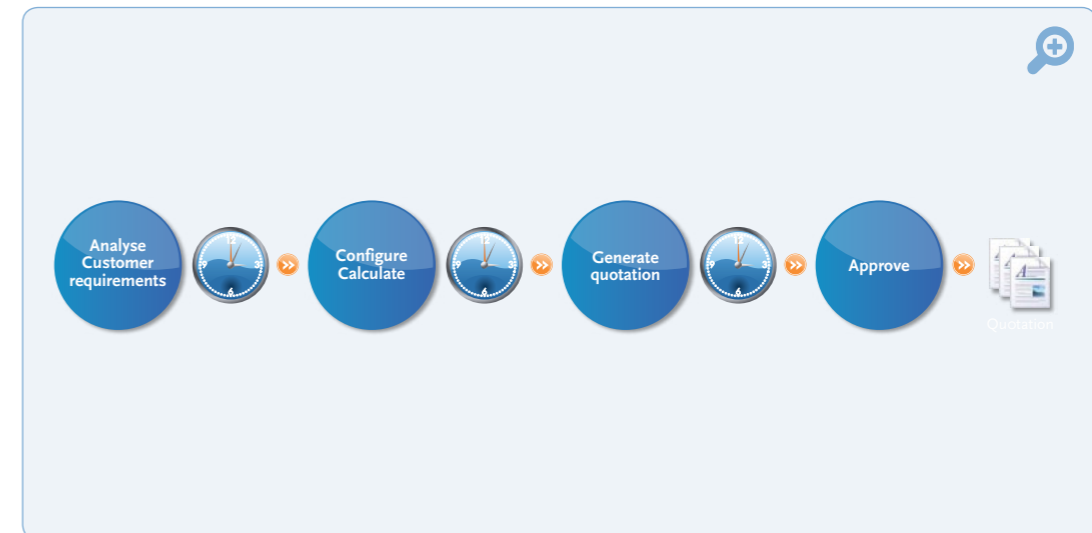
Often you will be at least partly dependent on other colleagues to be able to do your job. They all have their own priorities. Taking care of your quotation is not always at the top of their list. It also costs them quite a bit of time to put their product knowledge into the quotation. This all draws out your quotation cycle time.

## Changes

Once a quotation has been sent out, it is more the rule than exception that the customer wants to see one or more alternative quotations. Then the whole process repeats itself via all your busy colleagues: changes in the calculation, changes in text and once again checking to make sure that what you offer can actually be supplied.

## Agreement

With a bit of luck, the customer will then happily agree to your quotation (or the process will start all over again...) and delivery will follow. Producing a quotation, making changes and coming to agreement, demand that many colleagues and departments put time and effort into a request. It must be possible to make this process faster and simpler! Especially if you take into account what the effect of your quotation cycle time is on your chances of winning. The longer your potential client has to wait for your quotation, the further away you get from winning your potential order. Getting a grip on the speed of your quotation process is therefore a real must and brings a real increase in turnover.



# Quality

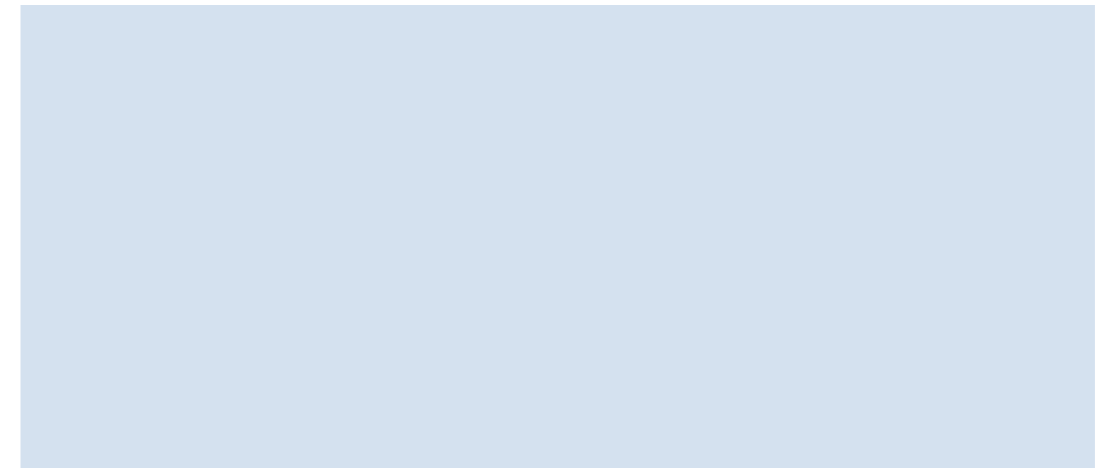
Mistakes are made when agreements and changes are not well-documented. In order to produce a quotation, an old quotation off the shelf seems to be helpful. By using copy and paste, a new quotation is put together. With all the (detrimental) results this method can entail...

## Tempting

Producing a new quotation often costs a lot of time. It can be tempting to grab an old quotation out of your records and copy bits of text from it into your new quotation. Of course you are careful about this. The old quotation you choose is from a comparable customer with a comparable problem. But even then, there are dangers lurking.

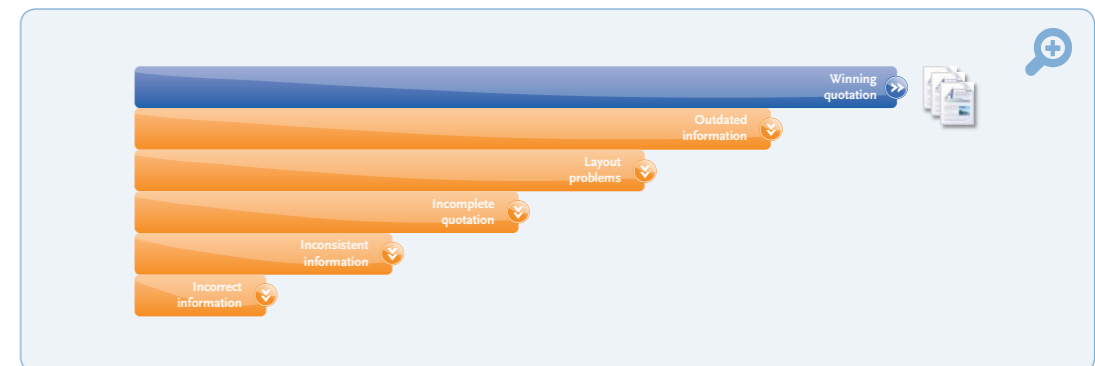
## Top 5 Dangers

To give you an idea of what can go wrong when copying and pasting from existing quotations, a Top 5 of Dangers follows. Guard against these dangers – or better yet – solve the problems that cause them. The solution is closer than you think.



## The key

Copy and paste behavior can really become a thing of the past. But for this to happen, you need to offer your sales personnel a good alternative. As it is certainly not an option to write out a quotation from start to finish. In the next chapter, you will read more about a qualitative, time-saving solution.





# The solution – saving and sharing knowledge (1)

In order to guarantee the quality and speed of your quotation process, it is important that your sales reps know exactly what they can sell or are selling. That saves time – no asking other colleagues for information – and prevents mistakes. And this makes the quotation process simpler, even if you sell complex products.

## Saving and defining knowledge

By saving company knowledge your sales personnel will no longer need to keep the information in their heads, as it were. Many companies defined their rules in handsome manuals and price books. But this is not the answer, as looking things up is still time-intensive and prone to error. Are you sure that all the rules and exceptions are down on paper? And is nobody missing anything?

## Sales support software

Avoiding mistakes is possible by saving knowledge from the whole company in sales supporting software. Your product experts, best sales personnel and best financial people, store their knowledge in the system. A next step is defining standard texts that – combined with the right product and price information – will eventually be the building blocks for the quotation.



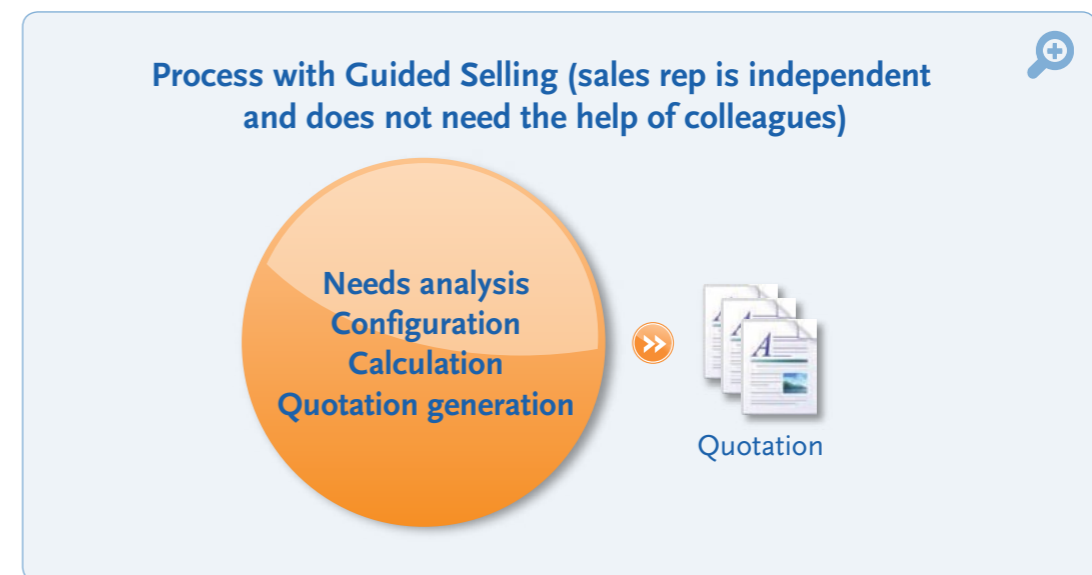
# The solution – saving and sharing knowledge (2)

## Guided Selling

This sales support system – also referred to as Guided Selling – functions like a configurator. Sales people are given questions about their customer's needs and answer these questions. During the configuration of a product, the software 'guides' the sales rep in the direction of the right solution. It is no longer possible to make mistakes, so the right product is always selected and the product configured can actually be produced. During configuration standard texts are automatically selected and quotations are constructed. There is also a cost and sales price calculation, supplemented by visualization if necessary. In this way, a sales rep can independently generate quotations quickly and correctly. Without the help of extensive product knowledge and other colleagues. And with no need to pay attention to style and design.

## Maintenance

You should of course maintain all your saved information and texts. But this now takes place in one location for the whole company and not at every random PC. If an adjustment has taken place, it is processed immediately and available to everyone. In this way, a sales rep can never send out an obsolete version of a quotation. And the sales rep no longer has to make unnecessary adjustments. That saves valuable time.



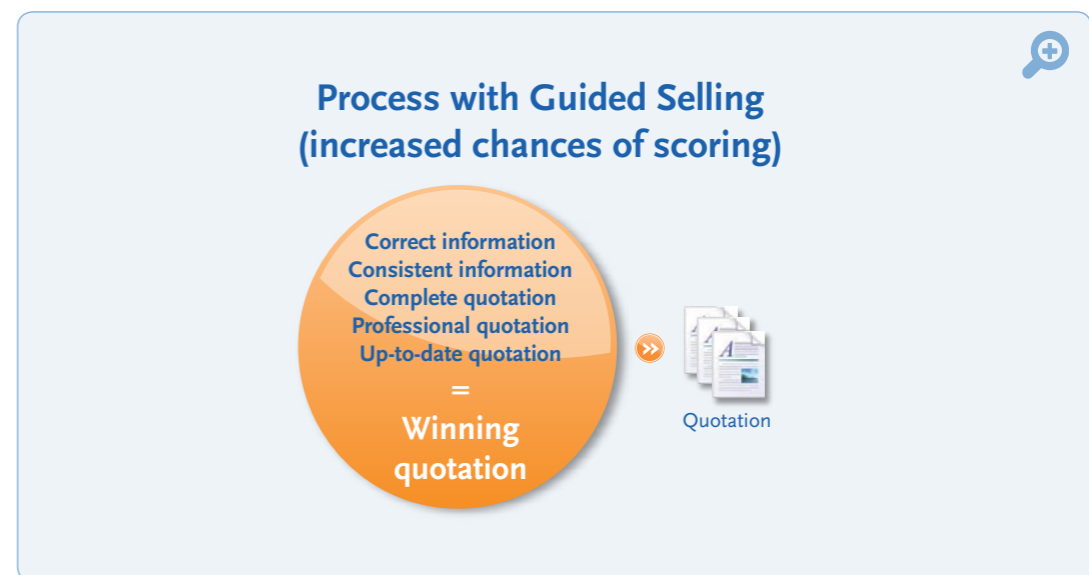
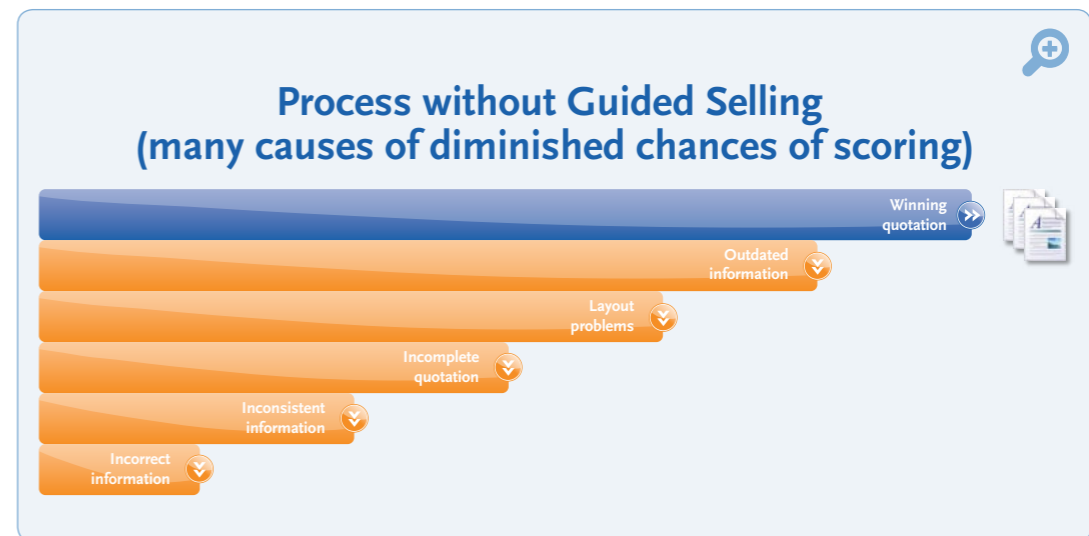
# Results

What does this knowledge guarantee bring you on a day-to-day basis? As mentioned:

- ✓ Quotations error-free and speedily generated
- ✓ Knowledge is saved and defined
- ✓ Mistakes in production are prevented

What derivative advantages does this have?

- ✓ Knowledge no longer leaves your organization along with your employees
- ✓ New sales personnel can be operational more quickly
- ✓ Your sales organization has less pressure of work
- ✓ Shortened cycle times
- ✓ Realization savings
- ✓ Increased chance of scoring



# About Sofon

Sofon is the supplier of sales support software under the name Sofon Guided Selling. With Sofon, quotations, contracts, orders and other sales documents are put together simply, quickly and error-free. 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.

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