



COECK BUILDS A STRONGER BUSINESS AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE WITH ORGANI AND PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Delivery of 30 tons of material can be challenging. Now imagine that those 30 tons represent just one shipment of many delivered on a daily basis. Add to that the complexity of ordering on a global scale, producing, tracking, fulfilling, managing and delivering those shipments and you get a glimpse into the challenges facing COECK.

Headquartered in Belgium, COECK is a market leader in the production and distribution of building materials for the Do-it-Yourself (DIY), wholesale and building industries. The company operates under three distinct names: COECK, specializing in raw materials, masonry material and finished building products; Cobo Garden, focused on outdoor stone and concrete products; and Distinction, offering floor covering and tile.

From its inception, COECK has been a pioneer in applying information technology (IT) to optimize its business operations and maximize success. Twenty years ago, the company implemented an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution on a mainframe platform, and through the years COECK has continued to customize this application to meet its evolving needs. Over time however, the application became too rigid to support COECK's growing business. The company was unable to integrate its legacy system with newer technologies, so as the company required additional tools and functionality—such as digital archiving and business intelligence (BI), it had no other option but to purchase disparate, standalone technologies from multiple vendors.

The consequences associated with the lack of integration affected the company's operations at essentially every level. Without the ability to connect its ERP system with other vital business systems, such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM), accessing, analyzing and archiving information and reports were difficult manual and cumbersome processes. Consequently, management's visibility into timely, business-critical information was limited, as was COECK's agility to quickly and easily react to market opportunities and customer demands.

Without a fully integrated system, COECK was managing and tracking all of its logistics processes manually—often using Excel spreadsheets. This tedious, inefficient and often error-prone process, impacted COECK's entire business, making it difficult to manage transportation logistics, manage and control inventory and ensure customers received the products they wanted—when they wanted them.

As a rapidly growing company that conducts business globally, COECK's needs had clearly outgrown its legacy system. The company chose to look for an external solution that would optimize its business operations, dramatically increase its efficiency levels, and enable the company to dispatch the right products—to the right customers—at the exact right moment to ensure customer satisfaction and maintain a competitive advantage.



CHALLENGE

Existing legacy ERP system too rigid to support COECK's rapidly growing international business

SOLUTION

Replaced legacy ERP system and numerous standalone technologies with one integrated ERP system from Organi to manage its entire business

BENEFIT

Tremendous efficiency gains throughout the organization; accurate and timely delivery of goods; improved data flow across departments; increased management access to business-critical information; agility to quickly react to market changes and opportunities; meeting customer requests for rush orders; access to up-to-date pricing; ability to forecast delivery and staffing schedules; reduced complexity by relying on a single solution

ORGANI: RIGHT PRODUCT, RIGHT VENDOR

In its search for a new system, COECK evaluated seven different solutions. The company's list of criteria was extensive: COECK wanted a fully integrated system that offered full control of customer orders, an integrated CRM application, availability of a digital archive, an integrated BI tool for reporting and analysis, and full integration with Microsoft Office products. The new system also had to ensure fast and accurate product delivery to customers, inventory control to meet customer requirements, and the on-time production of materials.

After a thorough evaluation process, COECK chose an ERP application from Progress Partner Organi, based on the completeness of its solution and Organi's proven experience with similar deployments. "Organi understood our business and what it would take to maintain our success. They had proven experience with similar projects and industry-specific expertise. And the system could support all of our business processes," explains Raf Verstrepen, Director of Marketing and Administration for COECK. Those processes include sales orders, purchase orders, inventory management, warehouse management—with integrated barcode RF technology, Electronic Data Interchange [EDI], digital archiving, bookkeeping and finance, CRM and BI.

COECK began the cutover process on a Friday, and by Monday the organization was live with 50 employees using the system. "The conversion was very well done. We were fortunate that Organi has the knowledge and expertise to support such a rapid and seamless deployment. We had access to all of the new functionality in addition to the historic information and statistics we needed from the old system. It was a very positive and successful experience," says Verstrepen.

ENTERPRISE-WIDE INTEGRATION OPTIMIZES OPERATIONS, INCREASES VISIBILITY, IMPROVES CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND DRIVES A COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE*

Since implementing Organi's ERP system, the company has realized tremendous benefits across its business. With a fully integrated and automated system driving its operations, access to information has significantly increased and the flow of information across the different departments has dramatically improved. Each location now has access to the same, up-to-date product, pricing, inventory and logistical information.

COECK's management can now access comprehensive, real-time information with the click of a button. This business-critical and timely information is helping the company to optimize its inventory, reduce losses and improve customer satisfaction by having the right products available when and where they are needed by customers. And visibility across its operations also gives management the confidence and ability to quickly and easily capitalize on market opportunities and meet evolving customer needs.

"Flexibility, stability, speed and low maintenance were major requirements for our new system," explains Verstrepen. "Our underlying Progress® OpenEdge® platform has lived up to those expectations. And the flexibility of our system provides us with the business agility to quickly and easily react to market changes. As our industry becomes increasingly international, we must be able to change and to adapt very quickly to remain competitive. And with our Progress-based Organi system, we are doing just that."

In addition, the system itself offers functionality that COECK previously relied on from numerous standalone systems, including CRM, EDI, BI and digital archiving. Another valuable tool the Organi system offers is the full automatic update of our catalog. COECK can now post its price list online for its buyers and even empower them to generate their own catalogs for use in their showrooms or by their own vendors. With Organi's electronic archive capability,



the company scans every incoming document and automatically archives every outgoing document, providing invaluable and easily accessible records and the ability to quickly follow any line of communication if needed. With the system's robust reporting, COECK can easily track and access information related to all incoming materials and the 56,000 orders it processes annually.

"Not only have we realized tremendous efficiency gains throughout our organization, but we are no longer dependent on numerous outside vendors to implement changes in our organization. Today, Organi is the only vendor we rely on to support our business," explains Verstrepen.

With COECK's previous application, meeting customer requests for a rush order of 30 tons of material, for example, required extensive direct communication between the different departments, which could be cumbersome and time consuming. Today, the company is able to automatically produce, track, and ensure delivery within two, or two to five days during peak season, through its new system—a tremendous improvement for its customers and a competitive advantage for COECK.

COECK's fully integrated, state-of-the-art system also ensures the most up-to-date pricing is always available. This functionality has significantly benefited the organization's ability to predict and manage its costs and revenue. For example, within two years COECK went from importing zero to 2,000 containers from Asia each year. The ability to understand the shipping price fluctuations in the market in real-time is very important to COECK and influences the company's buying prices. More precise, automated pricing controls can enable the company to capitalize on opportunities, minimize its risk and contribute directly to the company's bottom line.

Managing the complexity inherent in conducting global business is also a significant benefit with the new system. For example, different customers and suppliers—depending on the country—measure units of goods in different ways [i.e. square meters, pallets, etc.]. From day one of using the new ERP system, COECK was able to manage this distinction with ease. The system has also helped the company to improve the order picking and the registration processes associated with the different units, and enable all information to flow throughout the organization to the appropriate departments.

Access to information and increased visibility has greatly improved COECK's ability to manage its stock and ensure the accurate and timely delivery of goods to its customers. And the company now has the ability to more precisely forecast delivery—i.e. determine when the product can be delivered to meet the customer's timeframe, if it will be late, if it can't be delivered at all, and so on. The ability to determine this information early in the process reduces errors and improves the customer experience. And COECK can also forecast staffing requirements to meet planned shipments—for example to determine how many people it will need at a given time for production, order taking, order registration, fulfillment, etc.

COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP DRIVES SUCCESS

Much of the success of this project can be attributed to the collaborative working relationship between COECK and Organi. From the very start, COECK had a very clear vision of what it wanted in an application and partner, and Organi had the right solution and industry-specific experience to meet COECK's vision. "COECK is unique in that it acts as a producer, buyer and distributor to the DIY, wholesale and building sector. So partnering with a provider that truly understands our business and delivers ongoing support and functionality has been a key to accomplishing our goals," explains Verstrepen.

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Raf Verstrepen
Director of Marketing
& Administration
COECK

Organi's experience with the raw materials industry and distribution continues to be a benefit for COECK. In addition to its IT knowledge, Organi also understands the economics of COECK's business. "Understanding the workflow of our organization and what we need from an economics perspective to be successful [i.e. reduce stock, optimize selling, buying, archiving, containment, etc.] is also key to enabling our success. Organi has that rare combination of IT expertise and business experience. We have a fantastic partnership. Their knowledge coupled with our practical experience has delivered tremendous success," concludes Verstrepen.



COECK crane at work

ABOUT COECK

Headquartered in Belgium, COECK is a market leader in the production and distribution of building materials. The company operates under three distinct names: Coeck for raw materials, masonry material and finished building products; Cobo Garden for outdoor stone and concrete products; and Distinction for floor covering and tile. www.coeck.be

ABOUT ORGANI



Organi offers a unique combination of vertical applications and services to different markets, including manufacturing, transport & logistics, bailiffs and bookkeeping & finance. For more than 30 years, Organi has helped executives in these markets to incORGANrease their productivity and profits. The continuous effort in developing high-end applications makes Organi one of the most important Progress partners in the Belgian area. In 2010, Organi received the Fastest Growing Partner award from Progress. www.organi.be

PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or in the cloud, on any platform or device, to any data source, with enhanced performance, minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

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Rev. 08/14 | 6525-132293