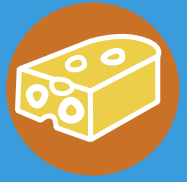




Customer story



Menken van den Assem



Menken van den Assem now have better control of inventory and the logistics processes work faster:

‘We have achieved real ROI, we can do more with the same people’

‘We have to work as efficiently as possible in our warehouse,’ says Arthur Starrenburg, operations manager at Menken van den Assem. ‘Logistics is very important to Menken van den Assem, because our products have such as short shelf life. By having Schouw Informatisering implement their solution Microsoft Dynamics® NAV and SI Foodware®, we have been able to improve our efficiency considerably. We can now see which products are at a location and with which shelf life, and the products are actually there.’ Market Tierolf, head of production planning, also says: ‘The check on inventory and shelf life is the main component of ERP.’

The organisation

Via its three operating companies Menken van den Assem markets a complete range of specialised food products. There are a total of 40 people working here, and half of them use the ERP system. The operating company Menken van den Assem Food BV imports frozen specialities which are supplied to various types of clients, including hotels, wholesalers and business and corporate caterers. Besides quality, these products are also convenient and easy to prepare and have therefore established specialities for our clients enabling them to differentiate themselves. The second company Ravoska Kaasimport BV has been specialising in foreign cheeses and speciality foods for almost 50 years. Products are imported from 14 different European countries, creating a range of about 1500 cheese and speciality products. The Ravoska product range is continually changing and is also subject to seasonal variations. Menken van den Assem Products BV is the third operating company which packages dry and fluid products, such as European specialities and meal enhancers in retail packaging. These products are either packaged to order or supplied from stock.

Selection process

‘In the past many transactions were processed by hand and the information was spread throughout the whole organisation because we didn’t have a stock control system. We worked like that for two to three years, after which we chose Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2.5, which we used for about two years,’ explains Starrenburg. ‘I have always been looking for a partner who understands foodstuffs. Eventually I found one, Schouw Informatisering. I immediately recognised our sector specific problems in the organisations where Schouw had already done successful implementations. And in addition, Schouw’s approach is much more professional than other partners we met. In fact, Schouw mapped out our organisation for the first time, which analysis showed exactly where the Dynamics NAV and SI Foodware solution fitted and where it did not. We then decided to upgrade Dynamics NAV.’





Training staff

'Initially there was some resistance. But this was mainly due to the fact that besides implementing Dynamics NAV and SI Foodware we also refined our procedures. We decided to work according to a certain model, but some staff wanted to continue working as they always had; it took them a while to realize the advantages of the new working practices. During the test phase they learned the new working methods with the greatest of ease,' according to Starrenburg. 'Nevertheless I can recommend every implementation to call together all staff, during or after working hours to simulate part of the working day. You can cater for 80% of the situations in just a few sessions and everyone will then work in the same way and achieve the same results. The other 20% will require another approach, but this can be discussed with the departments so that the best possible results are achieved. In addition I suggest doing a complete test with the whole company, and see what happens. People get increasingly enthusiastic and it generates interest in the system. They will even volunteer information and start making suggestions. By demonstrating this quick-win, you can win them over.'

Going live

Menken van den Assem succeeded in going live with the upgrade to NAV 4.0 within six months, due to the extra efforts from Starrenburg and his team. 'That was six months of very hard work, but then we really had achieved something. And the implementation itself actually went better than we expected! We weren't bothered by considerable changes or weird errors, we just had a few teething problems. Many problems had already surfaced and been resolved during the test phase. Some companies run the new and old systems in parallel for a while, we consciously chose not to. You have to do everything twice, the important thing is that the calculations in the purchasing and sales departments are correct. If I were to start the project again today, I would still go for the short and sharp implementation.'

More efficient warehousing

Using a forecast based on the expected purchase orders from their clients, Menken van den Assem places orders with suppliers a week in advance, so that the right amounts will be in stock to meet actual client orders. This means that the products are in stock when the client places an order. The forecast is difficult because the product shelf life is short and demand fluctuates. Starrenburg: 'Now that our warehouse is operating more efficiently we no longer have to search for products, we know exactly what we have in stock and where it is, so we can sell it straight away. The changes we made to the picking aisle have also increased efficiency, and improvements in our dispatch checks have increased productivity by 12%.'

Working faster and more accurately

We now spend a little more time on the administration, but it generates so much more information for us that we can see at a glance in the system. 'We know what we do now so much better,' explains Tierolf. 'At Ravoska that saves us two and a half hours a day.' After the implementation of Dynamics NAV and SI Foodware the inventory at Menken van den Assem is now better under control and the logistics processes work faster than ever. Starrenburg explains: 'We have real ROI. We can do more with the same people and we have retained our clients.'

Two phases: calmer and better

After the successful implementation of Dynamics NAV 4.0 we will enter the second stage of the project, where we will work on automating processes. We will introduce technology such as EDI and scanning. 'I am glad that we have tackled this project in two stages. It is calmer this way and easier to manage for a company of this size,' says Starrenburg. 'Should our organisation change in the next few years, then Dynamics NAV has the advantage that it is flexible and adjustable. This means we can continue to get a return on our investment for longer.'

Arthur Starrenburg, Operations Manager:
'If I were to start the project again today, I would still go for the short and sharp implementation.'