



## Schmidt Zeevis



## Rock-solid advantages for Schmidt Zeevis thanks to Dynamics NAV ERP software

The biggest and best fishmonger in the Netherlands is in Rotterdam. The shop is the eye-catching facade of Schmidt Zeevis, a fish company operating internationally and which supplies wholesalers, ship stores, business and corporate caterers and the top hotel and catering industry. Not so long ago, Schmidt Zeevis drastically modernized and automated its internal operations. And this really was necessary, because everyday they supply 133 different types of fresh fish. And nothing must go wrong.

Schmidt Zeevis employs more than one hundred people and has recently become part of the Kennemervis Groep, who expects to achieve a turnover this year of more than 200 million euros. Controller Jos van Vuren is responsible for the financial and administrative organisation and is also responsible for IT within the company. 'Our company actually has five different divisions, each tuned to a specific market sector,' he explains. 'The first division supplies the hotel and catering industry, forming 65 percent of turnover. Our vans travel from Friesland in the north of Holland to Maastricht in the south and in the west of Holland we deliver everything. This is a very specific sector, because these customers know exactly what they want. The second division supplies two ship stores that in turn supply fish to the ocean cruisers in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp. The third division deals with import and export which we now handle more and more frequently ourselves. The fourth division is our wholesale business which supplies wholesalers to the hotel and catering industry and nine Albert Heijn outlets, one of the largest supermarket chains in the Netherlands. And lastly, we have our shop, international cruises, as well as business and corporate caterers.'

### Efficiency improvements

A very important personal motive for Van Vuren was efficiency improvements. Van Vuren: 'When I started here in the 1990s we worked with forms which people filled in manually and were then passed on to the administration department. We knew then that we needed advanced IT systems, primarily to balance the inventory administration. Weight loss was a thorny issue: this mounted up in the course of the year. We also wanted to get a better idea of the filleting losses; these differ per fish, weight and operation - for a more accurate impression of the cost price of a certain product.' As far as control was concerned, the



IT systems must facilitate working with fewer errors. Van Vuren: 'When we take an order from a customer, we must be able to guarantee that that customer will get what he wants. That is more complicated than it seems, because each customer has his own specific requirements.'

### Selection phase

'In our situation we have to cope with registering the quantity of product in numbers and in kilos. But we also wanted an IT system to fully match our business processes, including the production activities. So what we wanted was an IT system that was very flexible and Microsoft Dynamics™ NAV is that,' explains Van Vuren. We started off by implementing Dynamics NAV



for the Schmidt Zeevis sales, purchasing and the financial administration departments. In 1998 we also wanted to include the production planning (filleting and processing fresh fish) in the Dynamics NAV. In the meantime a Windows version of Dynamics NAV became available, which meant that in fact, we started a completely new project. At the same time we were looking for a new Microsoft Business Solutions partner to assist us with the implementation; we chose Schouw Informatisering in Etten-Leur, the Netherlands. The strength of Schouw Informatisering lies not only in their IT expertise, but they also have excellent knowledge of the business processes that dominate the food industry. And Schouw has not just been our IT partner, Schouw has been our consultant. The people from Schouw have helped out in the company for a while; this was important because they had to be able to make the translation from virtual to actual reality.'

### Facts are important

Van Vuren: 'In my position as controller I knew that our organisation had much room for improvement, particularly in terms of efficiency. But if you don't have the right supporting information it remains a hunch. During the first phase of the project we mapped out the various logistics processes together with the people from Schouw Informatisering.' Internally there are four distinct logistics processes at Schmidt Zeevis: fresh fish, frozen, delicatessen and preserved products. Each of these processes has its own administrative and logistics disciplines. 'Fresh fish loses some of its weight, and that must be registered somewhere,' Van Vuren explains. 'Processing fresh fish is labour-intensive and has filleting losses. And in the other logistics processes, errors must be eliminated in order picking.' The sales orders are now split automatically so that the employees only see the order lines for their own department. Schmidt Zeevis works with coloured crates: each department has its own colour, and each crate has a barcode which can be scanned. The coloured crates and automated dispatch system mean that it is easier to check whether an order is complete.

### Reconciled books

Industrial Scanvaegt terminals with barcode scanners have been installed so that data can be registered on the shop floor. The terminals consist of a weighing system, a PC and a touch screen, all in one waterproof casing. The first control point is in the goods receipt department. For reasons of hygiene, incoming fresh fish is repackaged immediately in our own internal crates which are filled with fresh ice. Each crate is labelled with a barcode sticker indicating the contents and the lot number. So each crate has a unique number

- HACCP applies here too - so the traceability of fish from start to finish must be guaranteed. There are also a number of terminals in the production area, Van Vuren explains: 'It took the filleters quite some time to read the order lines and to write out production orders. Now they only see the order lines for the products which they have to process. The operations carried out and the resulting weights are registered here.' An extra control point in the order pick phase should reduce the number of logistics errors made with preserved, delicatessen and frozen products. Van Vuren: 'Everything has a barcode now: now when we scan an order line, the system tells us immediately whether the right item has been picked. Another advantage of this way of working is that new employees with little experience can be set to work after just a short training period - and with the labour market the way it is at the moment, that's a significant advantage.'

### Many advantages

We have deliberately tried to keep the system simple, explains Van Vuren: 'Within the software we use 'standard screens' with which our people can enter and look up all the information required, but they cannot change anything. Then the implementation isn't difficult, because the same transactions have to be carried out more than a hundred times a day, so you get into the routine very quickly. There was much anxiety about using computers: at the start of the training some people just didn't believe what they saw. And initially we used the old manual orders and the new computer system together, that was reassuring. But in practice the system turned out to be so easy to use, that the old manual orders were soon dismissed. It also became clear that we could easily export data from Dynamics NAV to Excel. In the old days we had to make all kinds of reports manually; now we have a list of reports on the screen, you just choose which one you want and paste the data in Excel. That saves a lot of time. Another considerable advantage is that the filleters are not wasting their time on things other than filleting. And because we can now see what the yield is from certain operations, we can correct some of our cost prices. No one will dispute that Dynamics NAV has reduced the number of man hours worked, we can generate 20% more turnover with the same number of people. And that means a tremendous improvement in efficiency. If I had to give our IT system marks out of 10, it would get almost 9: I'm certainly very pleased with what we are using now. We will have to work hard ourselves to turn that mark into a 10; that will depend on the administrative organisation and a little discipline. A system like this is never complete: in the future our information requirements will only continue to grow; but Dynamics NAV won't be holding us back.'