



Group Claes has been investing for many years in a continuous process control with RAW/Progress.

Real Applied Wholesale (RAW)/Progress is an ERP solution developed by Realdolmen on the basis of the Progress software. It combines ERP with WMS (Warehouse Management System) and provides comprehensive functions for the wholesale and distribution market. As an SME with mainly logistics activities, Group Claes greatly gains from the product. "RAW / Progress is the perfect ERP package to follow up our preset BPR", says Guy Minnen, responsible for the maintenance and development of the ERP system and all related software packages at Group Claes. "In order to remain competitive, we must continually evolve and invest in performing IT systems. We have consciously chosen for RAW / Progress and we have never regretted it."

EVERYTHING EXCEPT MEAT

Group Claes is one of the largest Belgian suppliers of the meat processing sector. The group has two core activities. Claes Machines sells a wide range of meat processing machines and ensures their installation, maintenance and repairs. Claes Distribution is a wholesaler of butchery equipment and distributes more than 14.000 quality products in Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and France. Ingredients, spices, herbs, sauces, packagings, kitchen equipment, shop equipment... Everything for the meat processing sector, except the meat itself.

HEAVY COMPETITION

"There is often little added value assigned to distribution in the process chain", says Guy Minnen. "But that's exactly where the success of Group Claes lies. We became the market leader by offering a remarkable added value. In Belgium, we deliver 98% of all orders within 48 hours.

"Highly accurate cost control is also a way to stay ahead of the competition, says Guy Minnen. "RAW/Progress gives us insight into the costs and the way we can reduce them and, at the same time, it helps us to deliver on our promises to the customers. Thus, we kill two important birds with one stone."

HOW IT BEGAN

Before the year 2000, Group Claes worked with a software package that probably would not have withstood the transition to the Euro seamlessly. At that time, RAW/Progress already presented itself consciously in the niche of the wholesale and distribution. Moreover, the product offered the necessary confidence on the Euro issue. Guy Minnen remembers: "The entire sales aspect was correct and the decision was therefore easily made. In 2000, Realdolmen started the implementation of RAW/Progress. Five months later the first ten users went live. The process went very smoothly and completely according to the expectations."

Initially, only the ERP package was updated and the existing processes were maintained. "Since then, we have been continually redefining our business processes to satisfy the increasingly stringent customer agreements," continued Guy Minnen. "RAW/Progress is perfectly suited to follow up our BPR (Business Process Re-engineering). Optimizing the cost structure is only possible if there is a good ERP solution as backbone."

AN IMPORTANT MILESTONE

Previously, orders were typed in the system, the order pickers picked up the products from the warehouse based on a checklist and, once again, the administration had to register all the operations manually. Guy Minnen: "In 2006, after the implementation of RAW/Progress and the subsequent ongoing BPR, we decided to install an RF (Radio Frequency) picking system. All this contributes to an optimal processing of the flow of goods."

All goods are scanned upon receipt and also at the time of picking, which ensures an additional level of control. The stock management as well as the order processing are fully computerized. Orders are now entered in RAW where the planner can immediately plan the deliveries. Then, the order pickers automatically get their assignments from the RF terminals in the warehouse. The quality of the deliveries has been drastically improved with this way of working. A lot less administration is required and we



can guarantee our customers a very reliable traceability of their orders and products." An additional innovation takes place in the field. Nowadays, the twelve representatives register their customer's orders directly in RAW with a pen tablet. This results in a gain of time and thus, once more, in an advantage over the competition. The same approach can be found in the management of the maintenance team of Claes Machines. This is now done with their PDA and all flows are processed by RAW/Progress.

"Realdolmen's involvement in all those improvements is highly significant. They understand our needs and make sure that the Claes Group remains up to date. This is a pleasant way of working; like colleagues."

INTEGRATION WITH QLIKVIEW

No ERP package can handle everything, but thanks to the technological openness of RAW/Progress the integration with other systems runs smoothly. Guy Minnen: "Claes Distribution owns 20 refrigerated trucks. The GPS-controlled detailed planning of transport is done with an external planning tool that cooperates seamlessly with our ERP application." Group Claes also searched for an external tool to visualize the KPIs to be followed up.

"Before 2010, not much attention had been paid to this, but Realdolmen, as single-source partner, recommended us to use QlikView. This soon proved to be the right choice. These days, we follow up every KPI you would expect to find in any traditional wholesaler's: turnovers versus budgets, margins, stock positions and rotations ... are all taken from QlikView.

We also check the levels of deliveries to our customers on a daily basis and, in the same way, we follow up our suppliers so that we can immediately intervene if something is about to go wrong with the planning. Obviously, we also use QlikView to monitor our warehouse processes. From these figures, we can accurately determine where we can gain valuable time. With 700.000 order lines per year, it goes without saying that every second counts."

And there is more than only monitoring. Indeed, Group Claes adjusts its processes on the basis of the reports from QlikView. "The last two years, our pick performance improved by 10 up to 15%, for example by changing the location of the products in the warehouse per season. Thus, BBQ marinades do not have to be put at the front of the warehouse during the winter."

Realdolmen took care of the integration of RAW data from the ERP system with QlikView at Group Claes and it happened without any problems. Guy Minnen confirms: "QlikView is an excellent and affordable tool for SMEs. It is one of the best products for reporting I have worked with so far, both in terms of speed and user friendliness of the dashboard generator. Since we work with QlikView, all the monthly figures are immediately available after the month-end closing and that allows us to have close control."

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE BRING?

Guy Minnen looks forward: "By the end of 2014, we would like to achieve two more projects with Realdolmen. We will expand our warehouse space and that will have a major impact from a logistical point of view. A thorough BPR will have to be done again and the ERP package will obviously follow. We also want to fully review the mobile solution for our representatives.

The application, that we would like to develop together with Realdolmen, should be independent from all devices and platforms. We want to make the existing e-shop more attractive for our customers through the installation of extra features on that app." What once began with a mere implementation of RAW/Progress grew into a solid business relationship with a great growth potential. "If it were up to me, this beautiful story could go on for a while," concludes Guy Minnen.

QlikView

