



UNITOP®
ERP TRADE

INTEGRATED ERP SOFTWARE

The IT grows as well

Sonnen-Herzog KG, Düsseldorf

**SONNEN
HERZOG**



Sonnen-Herzog is a family business - already managed by the fifth generation. Over 125 years, the company has developed into one of the leading wholesale companies for paints, wallpapers, floor coverings and tools in North Rhine-Westphalia. Senior boss Norbert Sonnen and his children Margarete and Stephan Sonnen manage the medium-sized traditional company together and with huge success: alongside the Düsseldorf headquarters, Sonnen-Herzog now operates 16 branches in the region and employs 150 members of staff. In the commercial year 2012, the company generated turnover of more than 40 million Euros. Without a high-performance, compliant IT system, growth over the past years would have been hard to achieved, says the management. Since 2003, Sonnen-Herzog has therefore trusted in unitop ERP Technical Wholesale, a branch solution from the medium-sized IT service provider GOB Software & Systeme.

The success story of Sonnen-Herzog started in 1888: company founder Johann Hubert Sonnen opens a small specialist retail store on the Herzogstreet 40 in Düsseldorf for paints, varnishes and drugstore items. He is able to expand rapidly. When Sonnen dies in 1911, his children and grandchildren continue to run the flourishing company and save it throughout the Second World War. The Sonnens even produced their own paints in the middle of Düsseldorf's inner city according to their formulas until the beginning of the 1970s. From the 1960s the company grew with great pace: wallpapers and later on floor coverings were added to the range. The branch was impressed by innovative store concepts and modern mixing machines. Norbert Sonnen, Johann's great-grandson, increasingly concentrated on wholesale.

There were lots of relocations, because the company is getting bigger. The Sonnens opened more and more branches in North Rhine-Westphalia.

It was clear at the beginning of the new century that a modernisation of the IT structures was necessary to continue to exist successfully on the market and be able to grow. The ERP system used at the time no longer met the requirements. Margarete Sonnen, now responsible for finances, IT and personnel on the management board, decided on a database system, which enables own further developments. In 2003 she chose GOB Software & Systeme as the partner: „The company not only has experience with wholesale customers, but was also able to offer us an extensive, integrated solution. That con-

vinced us," says the managing director.

Another decisive criterion for the Sonnens is the strategic cooperation between GOB and Microsoft unitop ERP Technical Wholesale, the branch solution from GOB, which

Function:

- ▶ CRM
- ▶ Financial Accounting
- ▶ Document Management (DMS)
- ▶ Workflow
- ▶ Cash Register
- ▶ EDI
- ▶ MDE
- ▶ Digital Document Dispatch

replaces the old system from a different provider, is based on the standard application Microsoft Dynamics NAV. One central benefit of unitop ERP Technical Wholesale is the extension with functions specific to the branch. At the same time customers benefit from the ten year development and support guarantee offered by Microsoft.

OPTIMISATIONS WITH UNITOP ERP

TECHNICAL WHOLESALE

unitop ERP Technical Wholesale ran reliably from the very beginning at Sonnen-Herzog. New branches were able to be easily incorporated in the system. As the company grew over the course of the years and was restructured, adjustments to the software were necessary. The management has improved the processes in the warehouse with GOB's assistance by using mobile data registration (MDE). Employees now have mobile access to process relevant data from the ERP system using mobile scanners. Margarete Sonnen: „That saves time because our employees are now immediately provided with the necessary information.“ The reorganization of the entire stock management by unitop ERP Technical Wholesale at Sonnen-Herzog made it possible to increase the turnover frequency considerably, and the value of the stocks can be reduced by almost one million Euros.

Document archiving is also integrated by the Sonnens together with their IT partner in Microsoft Dynamics NAV. The fact that paperwork and documents can be viewed simultaneously from any workstation makes cooperation between the departments and locations considerably. Furthermore, Sonnen-Herzog has also introduced EDI with assistance from the Krefeld experts, in order to accelerate and make data exchange easier with important suppliers. With a warehouse and sales area covering 13,500 m², the company now administrates 27,000 listed items with the aid of unitop ERP Technical Wholesale. „For our sales it is immensely important that inventory management and logistics run smoothly,“ says Stephan Sonnen, responsible for marketing and sales on the management board. „Painters often need paint very quickly and are therefore happy when

we can say exactly when the goods will be received thanks to our modern IT system.“

EXTENDED FUNCTIONS

With the 2013 version, a high-performance further development from Microsoft Dynamics NAV is now available. Users are able to use functions in the new version that have been proven in trade, industry and organisations and are now available across branches. This means that unitop ERP Technical Wholesale covers all requirements demanded from an integrated company solution. The range of functions is also supplemented with standard applications such as Microsoft Office, finance management, document management and workflows. GOB has its finger on the pulse and can always offer its customer innovative solutions suitable for the future.

Sonnen-Herzog decided on the version and has commissioned an update from GOB. The choice of unitop ERP Technical Wholesale means a clear reorientation for the Düsseldorf company. „unitop ERP Technical Wholesale is continually developed further. Many function are immediately ready to use without further adaptations. This means less work in the introduction and more time for process optimisation,“ says Andreas Holey, IT manager at Sonnen-Herzog, describing the advantages of the new concept.

INNOVATIVE AND VALUES

ORIENTATED

Lots of planned adaptations that are otherwise very complex to implement on your own are integrated in the GOB branch solution. „For automatic document despatch



we have estimated the work involved with implementation and have planned introduction for the first quarter of the coming year. Due to the fact that this function is now included in unitop ERP Technical Wholesale, we can use it directly after the update - without further adaptations,“ says Margarete Sonnen delighted. Sonnen-Herzog already has an eye on further projects for the future together with GOB: for example, a customer information portal is planned, which customers can use to call up the delivery status and production information at any time, including with a smartphone. „We think with innovation and act with orientation to values. Long-term and cooperative relationships with customers and suppliers have a high priority in our company philosophy,“ says long-standing managing director Norbert Sonnen.

„We want to grow further qualitatively - and in future we will continue to trust that GOB will support us with IT systems that grow with us.“

