



Prodin Blends BASIS With Chocolate for Sweet Success

The Hilversum-based BASIS partner Prodin Business Solutions, founded in 1975 as InfoStore Nederland B.V., has a history of delivering software development and tailor-made professional services for customers in the Netherlands and beyond, reaching back to the days of MAI. But that legacy is nothing compared to the tradition that their customer Stollwerck has in its DNA.

Stollwerck, founded in 1839, is a household name for chocolate and sweets which every German's tastebuds, adult and child alike, remembers dearly. In 2011, when Baronie/Sweet Products N.V. acquired Stollwerck, Prodin stepped onto the scene. In a move to strengthen and unify the IT landscape of the whole group, Baronie had Prodin replace the SAP system Stollwerck had been using.

Long-term Prodin and Baronie Partnership

Prodin and Baronie have been working together since 1988, when Prodin sold the standard BBx® Prodin-P2 solution on a UNIX platform to Baronie de Heer BV in the Netherlands. During the implementation, Baronie added more specific functionality to cover their needs. In the early nineties, Baronie took over the development themselves and virtually made their own, highly individualized version of Prodin-P2. This became their standard ERP package which is still in use today.

In 2010, Baronie contacted Prodin to request programming support for their tailor-made P2 solution. At that time, the solution served five Baronie sites in Belgium and the Netherlands, including four production sites and a distribution warehouse. When Baronie took over Stollwerck in 2011 from Barry Callebaut, another major player in the European and global sweets market, Baronie examined the possibilities of forming a common effective IT platform in order to bring the Stollwerck processes in line with the ones used at Baronie, and to generally optimize intercompany processes. Specifically, Baronie intended to reduce the complexity of the processes which were in place at Stollwerck.



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Founded in 1975 as "InfoStore Nederland B.V.", **Prodin Business Solutions** introduced a suite of business software for MAI which they have extended and improved ever since. Today, the current product generation Prodin-P3 is a suite of ERP modules suitable for a wide range of companies, including production companies (project-based or serial production), wholesalers, as well as service and maintenance suppliers. In 2003, Prodin was awarded the SAP Innovation award for the application of the SAP Netweaver technology on Prodin-P3 for their customer Royal Schelde. Completed with specialized modules such as Customer Relationship Management (CRM) or the mobile solution "Prodin Business Workplace" coined for the on-site use by service and maintenance personnel, Prodin-P3 is a state-of-the-art ERP solution which a wide customer base of SMEs in many European countries put their trust in.

Prodin has been a BASIS partner since the 1980s, embracing all generations of BASIS technologies to supply their customers with the latest and greatest software technology, culminating in 2012 with Prodin-P3 support on iPads and tablet PCs, thanks to BASIS' Browser User Interface (BUI). www.prodin.nl

At the time, Stollwerck had an IT landscape that consisted of a hosted SAP 4.6 environment combined with tailor-made software at all their production sites and warehouses in Germany, France and Belgium. They ran the standard SAP modules for inventory management, production planning, quality management, sales/CRM, business data warehouse and finance/accounting, enhanced with a solution to map to the specific pricing and trade terms of the German market.

Streamlining the IT Landscape: Prodin vs. SAP

In order to streamline the IT systems, Baronie had two options to consider: They could either implement SAP on both sides, or they could make Stollwerck use the Prodin solution, which covered all of Baronie's needs and which they had been using successfully for more than 20 years.

Since Prodin is experienced in both SAP as well as analyzing and re-engineering business processes, they carried out an analysis to determine the gap between processes and systems. The study found that P2 could only have supported the Stollwerck processes with a huge and costly impact on programming. On the other hand, the proverbial complexity of SAP could not be reduced to an acceptable level so that Baronie could have worked with the SAP system either.

After a thorough and meticulous decision-making process, Baronie finally decided on a third option. As the centerpiece of the new landscape, Prodin was to implement an out-of-the-box version of P3 (Figure 1) at both Stollwerck and Baronie, which is based on Visual PRO/5® and BBj®, and runs Windows Server 2008 on hardware located in Cologne, Germany. A Cognos replication database will be hosted at the Prodin data center in Haarlem, Netherlands.

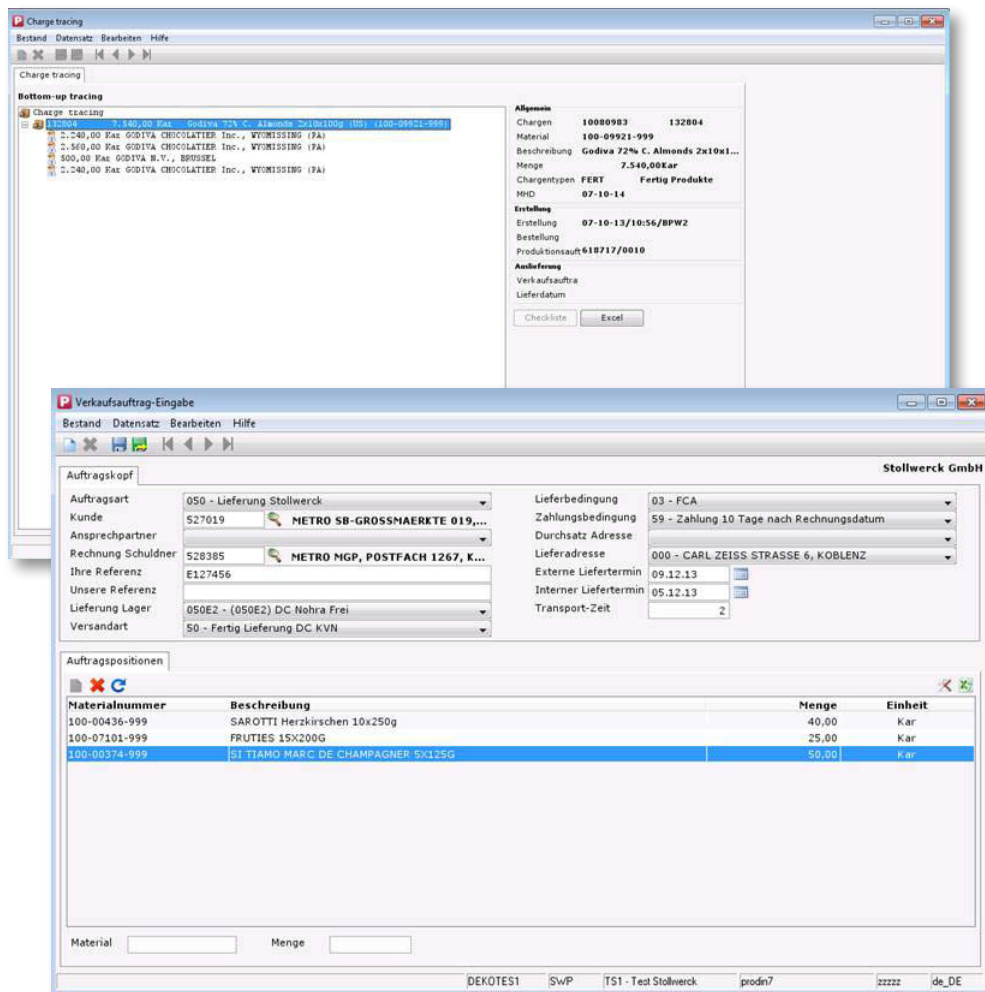


Figure 1: Lot tracing (top) and sales order entry (bottom) in Stollwerck's Prodin-P3

STOLLWERCK

*Founded in 1839 in Cologne by Franz Stollwerck, the company first produced cough drops very successfully, expanding its range to chocolate and marzipan, and later, gingerbread. The company's history very much reflects the eventful European history. After a phase of expansion in the 19th century with factories opened in London, Vienna, Romania and the Austro-Hungarian empire, Stollwerck suffered from the depression in the late 1920s and the consequences of World War II. But in 1947, business successfully restarted. Between 1948 and 2000, Stollwerck acquired numerous renowned competitors, expanded its market share and established the company as a global brand.

Today, Stollwerck runs five factories in Germany, Belgium, and Switzerland. In Cologne, Stollwerck operates a fully automated chocolate packing line which achieves a packing rate of 1,000 chocolates per minute. The company achieves an annual turnover of approx. 500 million euros and produces an output of more than 100,000 tons of sweet products. Since 2011, Stollwerck has been part of the Baronie Group. www.stollwerck.de



A Stollwerck ad from the early 20th century read "Stollwerck's talking chocolate plate - sings, plays music, and recites," advertising these chocolate cylinders for phonographs as a "season's novelty"



Out Goes SAP and P2, in Comes Prodin-P3

After making the decision, Prodin set to work in February 2012 with a very ambitious time frame, to replace SAP before October 1. To illustrate just how hefty this project was, consider these key factors. The migration involved 300 SAP users in three countries and seven locations. Stollwerck processes about 120,000 sales orders per year, 75% of which are EDI-based. About 700,000 pallets of chocolates per year leave the production sites. Stollwerck delivers product to virtually every retailer in Europe, as well as customers in the U.S. and Australia, either directly from the plants or from one of the four distribution warehouses with 120,000 air conditioned warehouse location bins. An ambitious time frame, indeed.

It goes without saying that efficient project management was crucial for the project's success. Stollwerck commissioned Prodin to map the following functionalities in P3:

- Finance
- Sales
- EDI processes
- Quality assurance
- Purchase
- Material management
- Production
- Distribution processes, both to customers and intercompany
- Distributed warehouses

To complete the IT landscape, Prodin was to implement complex interfaces for third party software catering for sales forecasting, payroll, and Lotus Notes, which they use to manage mail workflow and product development. BASIS Europe stood by, supporting Prodin with the software installation and addressing specific questions about the best use of their BBJ Data Server, Visual PRO/5, and BBJ.

Ambitious Roadmap

The project roadmap entailed implementing the Stollwerck production sites first and creating temporary interfaces with other systems. The German sites in Berlin, Saalfeld, and Norderstedt went live in September, according to plan. The Norderstedt implementation was deliberately postponed in order to perform additional testing on the warehouse management storage strategy. The scanners in the warehouse connect with Prodin-P3 so that all WMS movements throughout the warehouse can be monitored in real-time.

On December 1, the Stollwerck sales organization, finance, and EDI with customers and shipping companies went live. They dedicated the year 2013 to bringing the sites in line and to optimize specific processes. In the second half of 2013, the implementation of the distribution warehouse in Belgium was finalized. In 2014, the Baronie sites in Belgium and the Netherlands will be brought up to speed – all within the planned time-frame, which not only included implementation of the software, but also the training of the users to keep them at the same productivity level throughout the migration process.

New Challenges

While the migration is under way in the various Baronie locations, Prodin is already working on an extension to Prodin-P3 that will allow all corporate account managers to enter, share, and distribute their customer sales forecasts. The new module will seamlessly integrate into the Prodin menu and be developed completely in BBJ. It is scheduled to go live on January 1, 2014.

In June 2014, Stollwerck will switch their shipping partner, which implies another challenging project for Prodin. The distribution warehouse in Nohra near Weimar will move to a new site with 25,000 storage locations near Berlin, under management of the third party logistics supplier Fiege Logistik.

Summary

When chocolate maker Baronie Group took over Stollwerck in 2011, they decided to unify their IT landscape. They replaced SAP at Stollwerck with P3, Prodin's most recent ERP system release built on BBJ and Visual PRO/5. Prodin managed the initial project and delivered it on time and in accordance with the customer's expectations. Once the migration is 100% complete, the whole Baronie group will profit from streamlined processes, mobile access to important company data, high data security standards and Prodin's comprehensive services. ■

Sweet Products/Baronie

Belgium-based Sweet Products, a privately owned company, is the parent of the Baronie Group of companies. Baronie produces a wide range of chocolate products for their international customer base. Baronie owns and operates three production sites in the Netherlands and Belgium, and an ultra-modern logistical center for warehousing and co-packed activities, located in Belgium. Baronie is a strategic supplier for virtually all major European retailers, for whom it provides branded products as well as an extensive range of private-label products. The company was founded in 1896 in the Netherlands. www.baronie.com