

Goals:

- A standardised configuration solution for all sales employees worldwide
- A current, comprehensive view of all producible machines including pricing and conditions
- Support of (new) team members throughout the consulting and configuration process

Challenges:

- Demand for faster deliveries and lower prices at higher quality
- Complexity of customised configurations
- Proposals and configurations in multiple languages and multiple currencies

Solution:

Cincom Acquire™

- Guided Selling and Product Configurator
- Quotation and Proposal Management

Key Results:

- Systematic proposal configuration with automated transfer to Sultex headquarters
- 50% reduction of complex sales cycles
- Order processing time reduced from days to minutes
- All languages covered, in one solution

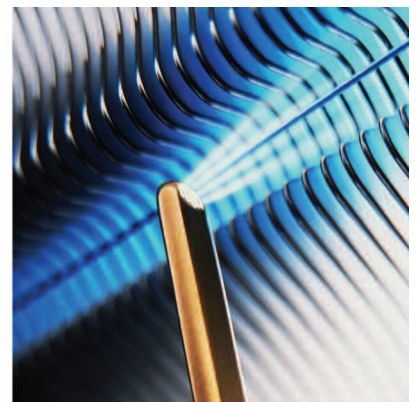
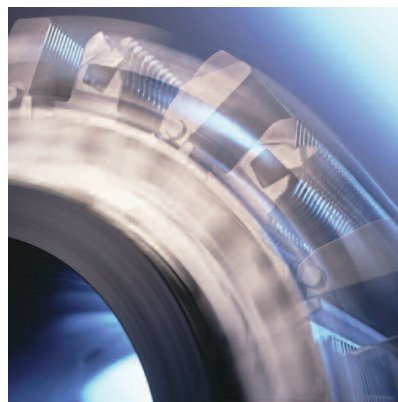
“Everything ever built by Sultex is stored in the Cincom configurator.”

“Due to the complexity of our configurations, our existing ERP and CRM system had quickly reached its limits; we needed a new solution. And in this case, you don't go for the second- or third-best; you choose the best.”

– Chief Information Officer, Sultex

Profile in Success: **Sultex**

Order processing time reduced from days to minutes!



Situation

Swiss-based Sultex produces technically sophisticated weaving machines and is the only manufacturer that provides all leading systems. This projectile, rapier, air-jet and multi-phase machinery consists of 10,000 single components and thousands of variations. Sultex is also the worldwide leader in the high-end textile market for special textiles and industrial fabrics such as bike wear and airbags. The typical four-month production of a new machine gets started as soon as the complete list of customer specifications is available. Prerequisites include an error rate of close to zero and a timely delivery.

Founded as Sulzer in 1834, the company joined the Sulzer Technology Group in 1993 and changed its name to Sulzer Textil Ltd. in 1999. In 2003, the company (as Sultex Ltd.) joined the ITEMA Group, the worldwide leading manufacturer of textile machines with 3,000 employees and an annual revenue of more than €741 million.

Strategic Challenge

Until 2001, Sultex's IT environment consisted of five hardware platforms and 40 software products – a cost-intensive constellation resulting in maintenance problems and limited opportunities for further enhancement and customisation. By means of a sustainable system consolidation combined with a complete reorganisation of all processes, the IT budget could be reduced to one fifth while at the same time reducing the IT staff.

For machine configuration, Sultex was using an internally developed CRM tool that was to be replaced. Whereas the new SAP ERP system proved very efficient for customer contact maintenance, its use for the vast number of configuration variations was limited. Cincom was chosen not only for its technological advantage but also for the reliability of both its team and its local implementation partner, Resulting Services.

Project Realisation on Schedule

The basic conditions were challenging. The goal was to match three projects – ERP, PDM (Product Data Management) and Configuration – at the same time and establish a consistent data format with proper interfaces. Additional challenges, particularly with respect to configuration, were:

- The massive amount of rules in Sultex's legacy system. Sixty-thousand rules (partly redundant) could be reduced to about 200 per product. Now one rule consists of a table containing several line entries.
- The concept of rule-based pricing. For example, if additional machines are purchased, a reduced total price for complete equipment is calculated.

The configurator was released on schedule, even though the configuration of proposals had to be implemented while the sales configuration project had already begun.

Sultex uses the Cincom solution as:

- A product configurator, taking the technical features from the PDM system (Product Data Management)
- A proposal configurator, transferring the entries to the ERP system
- A sales configurator, supporting the sales department with proposals and orders

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Before Cincom, salespeople made a note of the customer requirements and forwarded the information to the back office, where a proposal was generated and sent to the customer via mail – sometimes after multiple consultations and corrections. Now, sales representatives and customers come together to develop a first draft of the configuration using a laptop. Since even in offline mode all series released for sale are accessible, the salesman can offer a binding price and display proposal margins and commissions. The configuration draft is then automatically sent to engineering, which is responsible for implementing any special customer requests and for transferring the final order definition to the ERP system.

The main benefits for Sultex are:

- A comprehensive view of all available machines for worldwide sales. This enables new sales employees to start off quickly while simultaneously speeding up the introduction of new products to the market.
- A 50% reduction of complex sales cycles. Since the configurator excludes technically false configurations, the sales department is free to concentrate its efforts on customer care. Immediate on-site price offerings demonstrate excellent service.
- A reduction of order processing times from days to minutes. Engineering is free to concentrate on more productive issues such as special requests and scheduling.
- The ability to cover all languages (German, English, French, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese) in one solution.

Perspective

In the future, Sultex plans to more closely integrate the configurator in its CRM system (SAP CRM Mobile), allowing employees to get a comprehensive overview of all proposal data in the CRM at one glance.

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