

WERMINVAL IS BENEFITTING FROM A TIMELY SWITCH TO SAP S/4HANA



Technological innovation isn't usually the first thing that comes to mind when people think about a social welfare company. Yet Antwerp-based Werminal is a pioneer when it comes to providing digital support for the company's social, people-oriented services. Werminal recently implemented SAP S/4HANA, the modern ERP platform, with Ctac's help. CEO Jonny Coulon and CFO Natacha de Groot explain why and how Werminal made the switch in no time at all.



Werminal is a social welfare company that provides employment and guidance to people with fewer opportunities on the job market. The non-profit association offers jobs to more than 500 people in Antwerp and the surrounding area. "Our employees provide various services", says Jonny Coulon, CEO of Werminal. "They pack products, make advertising displays, maintain public green spaces and carry out a whole range of other activities for large food, FMCG and industrial companies, public authorities, port operators and others."

A greater range of services and long-term partnerships

In the past, Werminal mainly offered sub-contracted services, such as packing and labelling large quantities of products. But that's all changing. Jonny: "One thing I expect, for example, is to be packing very few items in plastic within a few years. That's why we're thinking ahead and Werminal is slowly changing course. We've now expanded our range of services – we're supporting ambitious start-ups and SMEs, we've intensified our die-cutting activities, and we're working for more and more municipalities and local authorities."

Jonny explains that this expansion is in line with Werminal's ambition: "We're increasingly thinking in line with what our partners want, and aim to help them achieve their dreams. That's why we're entering into long-term relationships with organisations that, like us, are highly committed to inclusiveness and sustainability. These partners offer a positive attitude to Werminal's social mission."

Update the existing ERP or switch to SAP S/4HANA?

Werminal CFO Natacha de Groot explains why the company needed a new ERP system: "Due to our extensive range of services, our system has to support different types of activities for many different customers and markets. We want to be able to respond quickly to changes and work in a flexible manner. In 2019, we concluded that the set-up of our ERP system at the time, SAP ECC, was inadequate in that respect. It led to problems when it came to organising our warehouses. We had to decide whether to update the system or make the switch to SAP S/4HANA. Because we wanted to lay a solid foundation right now for the future, we chose the latter."

Keep the good habits and leave the bad ones behind

Werminal called on their trusted IT partner Ctac to manage the transition. Natacha: "Working with Ctac, we looked at our business processes in detail and put how we used SAP under the microscope during the "explore days". Ctac pointed out areas where we could make efficiency gains. What's more, it also became clear that we had developed several habits where we couldn't remember why we did things that way in the first place. To prevent this from happening again in SAP S/4HANA, we got all our stakeholders involved in the development of the new digital processes. And that's clearly worked, as we've not heard any complaints from our employees despite the radical changes."

"Thanks to this thorough preparation, in SAP S/4HANA we now have an ERP platform that really supports and assists our company", explains Jonny. "Almost our entire organisation runs on it, from purchasing, the shop floor and accounting, to sales and customer service. In addition, we'll soon be able to support multiple customers and processes in our warehouses."

Increased traceability, findability and flexibility

Now that they've made the switch, Werminal can guarantee customers the quality assurance they seek. This is very important, as Jonny explains: "For our partners in the fast-moving consumer goods market, with food and care products, it is essential to know at all times which products were processed on which dates, which batch they came from and how many are still in stock. This means that products can be withdrawn from the chain in the event of a recall due to a manufacturing defect in a partner's manufacturing process, for example. With SAP S/4HANA, we can provide them with full and accurate product information." Natacha continues: "The product, order and customer information is also easier to find as we can search the databases faster and with greater accuracy."

Trust and partnership

"The implementation of SAP S/4HANA ran without a hitch", says Natacha. "We made the switch in just six months. We also dedicated a lot of our own time to this, testing all the scenarios – including those where we had to correct errors, for example. Ctac prepared us thoroughly for this, and assisted us with the transition."

"The great thing about our collaboration with Ctac is that the same people who helped us with the planning also took care of the implementation", adds Jonny. "As a result, we were on the same page and operated on a basis of trust. We are true partners."

Frederik Depovere from Ctac was closely involved in the project. He also stressed the importance of the partnership in making the switch a success: "We're proud that, eight years after the initial SAP implementation, we were there to guide Werminal through the next step of their digital journey. At Ctac, we want to work with our customers on the basis of trust and partnership, with a healthy "go for it" mentality. And that's certainly been the case with Werminal. Jonny confirmed this when he expressed his trust in us with the now legendary words: *Vamos a la Hana!*"

More options now, and ready for the future

"SAP S/4HANA will help us to roll out our revised strategy", concludes Jonny. "It's the foundation on which we'll be able to build our future plans, such as manufacturing integration with partners. But crucially, S/4HANA allows us to focus on what we believe is most important: our employees and partners."

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