DORFINGER KG featuring traceNET & PECS – Enterprise resource planning & production control à la activeIT

"Expansion only goes hand in hand with a proper operating system for the operational business!"

Since 2020, Dorfinger KG – one of the largest potato, onion, and garlic packaging companies in Austria – has relied on traceNET, the enterprise resource planning system for the food industry, made by the Austrian software provider activeIT. Production processes have been controlled and optimised since 2021 with activeIT´s Production Efficiency Control System named PECS.

In combination with an integrated EDI solution from EDITEL – one of the leading international providers in the field of "Electronic Data Interchange" – numerous advantages resulted for the over 100-year-old family business, which was founded in 1919.

Karlheinz Zelinger, Operations Manager of Dorfinger KG and Stefan Bednarik, Project Delivery Manager at EDITEL about important decisions, necessary optimisations, and the cooperation with activeIT.

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DORFINGER
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• since 1919
• international trade in potatoes, onions, garlic, tropical & dried fruits
• approx. 100 employees at 2 locations
• more than 50,000 tons of fresh potatoes & onions per year

Production efficiency control system PECS
• intuitive and fast planning, control & analysis of production
• covers all production-relevant areas
• as a stand-alone solution or for an extended range of funtions of the existing ERP system

Merchandise management system traceNET
• ERP system with comprehensive range of funtions, especially for the food industry
• mapping and optimisation of the complex processes of food producers

FROM AN INTERNAL MARGINAL PRODUCT TO AN INDISPENSABLE GAMECHANGER WITH EDI INTERFACE
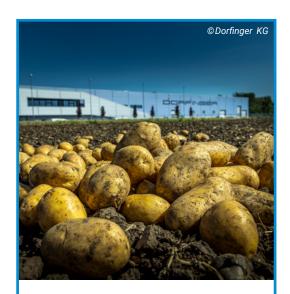
The traceNET enterprise resource planning system has been in use at the traditional Austrian company since 2017 but was never used intensively and to its full extent. *"In the past we used the software only for supplier registration, without assigning batch numbers. traceNET was just a small side issue and an isolated solution for us,"* says Zelinger.

The deciding factors for Dorfinger to use the product, which had been present in the company for a long time but whose potential had never been fully exploited, were thoughts about the future of the business and discussions with business partners:

"As a company, we were faced with the choice to change and expand or to let everything stay the same. Our company has now been around for over 100 years. After growing steadily and running out of space, we suddenly had six locations, which was very inefficient – not only in terms of internal rides. So, in 2020 we invested in a new location and closed all the others – with the exception of the shop in Inzersdorf and the onion production in Breitstetten. All this only went hand in hand with a proper operating system for our operational business."

The exchange with business partners, who also rely on the ERP and production solutions from activeIT, led to the initial spark at Dorfinger KG, as Zelinger explains:

"Not only the future of the company was decisive, but above all the feedback from our business partners. Because we already had

traceNET and all our partners are consistently satisfied with it, we decided to expand traceNET and integrate it more into our operations. After a short conversation with activeIT, we immediately knew what we wanted. This is why the project was implemented so quickly."

With the complete integration of the merchandise management system from activeIT, the traditional company also took the step from web EDI to an integrated electronic data interchange solution from EDITEL, the specialist for electronic data exchange. The EDI solution integrated in traceNET eliminates, among other things, the need for manual data entry, which creates free capacities that are very valuable not only for growing companies in order to achieve maximum efficiency in the supply chain.

For Zelinger, *"well-functioning business communication is the be-all and end-all"*. Therefore, the changeover to an EDI solution integrated in traceNET was *"an important step towards modernisation"*, whereby the operations manager particularly emphasises the user-friendliness: *"The solution is very easy to implement in day-to-day business, which is why everyone involved is very satisfied with it. In addition, everything runs much more efficiently now!"*

Project Delivery Manager, Stefan Bednarik from EDITEL: *"Dorfinger has already used our Web EDI solution in the past. This is a cost-effective option that many companies with low transaction volumes use to be able to exchange data electronically with their retail customers. Due to the ever-increasing order volume and the desire of Dorfinger's partner REWE to implement further process steps with electronic delivery notes and invoices, the logical next step was the joint project with activeIT for complete data integration. This was finally implemented in the course of the opening of the new location in Untersiebenbrunn. The new integrated solution now ensures much more efficient processes at Dorfinger and was very well received by all those involved in the company due to its easy handling. The smooth changeover to paperless electronic invoicing (INVOIC) is particularly positive here."*

THE COOPERATION WITH activeIT

According to Karlheinz Zelinger, the cooperation with activeIT was and is excellent:

"Working with Christopher Immervoll – PECS Consultant at activeIT – is a pleasure! He takes his time, shows competence down to the smallest detail and not only knows the product like the back of his hand, but also knows what the product means to us and what happens on the respective machines. Whether goods are packed in film or nets are clipped – these are two different situations that also mean something different for PECS. I've had many points of contact with IT companies, but I've never seen anyone internalise individual customer issues like Mr Immervoll."

The operations manager at Dorfinger KG sees potential for improvement in terms of lead times, but this is not directly related to activeIT. *"We want to install an interface on the automatic readout device. There, the farmer from whom the batch originates is to be stored. Unfortunately, we have already been discussing this supply chain issue for a few months, but this is not solely dependent on activeIT. Otherwise, we would probably already be through with it."* (laughs)

Stefan Bednarik from EDITEL, a long-standing partner of activeIT, also emphasises the good business relationship:

"Over the past few years, activeIT and EDITEL have jointly implemented numerous customer projects with countless partner connections. Our part here is to "translate" the in-house format

Karlheinz Zelinger
Operations Manager Dorfinger KG

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"There are so many important aspects around our products. Every step of the process involves an incredible amount of information. From delivery and cooling, to sorting and washing, to production and delivery – with PECS we now have the overview, and this overview is extremely important and useful, and above all very easy to retrieve.

agreed with activeIT into the respective target formats of the customers in order to then exchange this data with the customers in a secure manner via our eXite platform. These projects mostly involved connecting fruit and vegetable suppliers to wholesalers. Electronic orders, delivery notes and invoices were implemented as standard. For some suppliers also article master data – called PRICAT in EDI jargon – although this was rather the exception. Due to the many years of cooperation, we are well attuned to each other and understand each other. This good relationship has improved with every implemented project, whereby honest and open communication forms the basis for this. Getting to know each other personally at the "Open House Day" has certainly had a very positive effect on this."

CHANGEOVER, OBSTACLES & "NEVER AGAIN WITHOUT PECS"

According to Dorfinger, one of the biggest difficulties was making the staff understand how the new system would perform in practice.

"Before going live, we had training sessions where everything was illustrated. It seemed like we were all ready for traceNET & PECS. Then the changeover came, and we realised that theory and practice were far apart."

In the end, it took weeks before PECS was fully operational at the Lower Austrian potato producer.

"I can still remember when we started out running after every order that was sent to the line to make sure that the order was implemented correctly. But when everything worked, and we started to trust the system – from the machine operator to the colleagues in the goods receiving department – we quickly realised that the software makes things a lot easier for us: all the information is there at the click. After the initial familiarisation phase, the feedback from our employees has been consistently positive to this day. Today, no one can imagine working without traceNET & PECS!"

From EDITEL's point of view, the project implementation was also "efficient and structured", "because all participants – REWE, activeIT and of course Dorfinger KG itself – did an excellent job here".

Bednarik adds: "It was also helpful that we have been supporting REWE in the EDI rollout for years and therefore not only know the processes and messages inside out, but also have good contacts to the people involved. I would like all our projects to be so well organised. There is really nothing to complain about in this project. Everyone involved did their part with the utmost care right from the start, which made a time-efficient implementation possible."

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EFFICIENCY, OPTIMISATION & QUALITY

The introduction of traceNET & PECS brought an unbelievable simplification of everyday work for Dorfinger International, says Zelinger: "Previously, we worked with handwritten slips of paper – also at goods receipt and in production. Now we have nice screens. (laughs) We now see all the information at a glance and can track batch trees, for example, at the touch of a button."

Zelinger sees a clear advantage of PECS in the increase in efficiency:

"There are so many important aspects around our products. Every step of the process involves an incredible amount of information. From delivery and cooling, to sorting and washing, to production and delivery – with PECS we now have the overview, and this overview is extremely important and useful, and above all very easy to retrieve. With a click on the batch, I see all the information I need – based on that, I can make quick decisions. This was not possible

in the past when we were still juggling handwritten notes. In order to find out when a product arrived, how long it had been there and where it was currently located, we had to find and ask the responsible people. Accordingly, internal processes could also be improved through PECS."

The topic of customer complaints and the traceability of quality problems was also optimised by the activeIT solution:

"We notice this especially when we have to research something – for example, in relation to customer complaints. If a product has quality problems, we know at the touch of a button when the batch was delivered, when it was washed and when it was packed. Such information is incredibly important for us, as it allows us to understand down to the smallest detail why the quality of the goods deviates. An example: The potatoes of variety XY from farmer XY were claimed by the customer due to quality defects. A comparable product arrives at the customer in perfect condition. Thanks to PECS, we can immediately see that the potatoes complained about have been in cold storage longer than the comparable goods in perfect condition. We can therefore draw conclusions from this and not only increase the quality of our products, but also learn a lot for the operational business."

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