

## Pakstation Venlo (Weyers Group) featuring PECS – the Production Efficiency Control System by activeIT

In 2019, the Austrian software producer activeIT implemented its production control software, then called traceNET-Production, in the Dutch fresh food centre, Fresh Park Venlo. After a project pause and under a new name, the matter has regained momentum. Time for a summary from Erik van Maren, Director of Pakstation Venlo B.V., Project Manager Sebastian Kamps, and Christopher Immervoll, PECS Consultant at activeIT. (Guest comment by Michael Spalek, Economic Delegate of Advantage Austria)

### WHY activeIT?

**E. van Maren:** It all started with a university project by two students – a thesis in the form of a feasibility study to improve functional environments in our industry. The students had intensive discussions with us and various suppliers, analysing the software solutions used in respective companies and their benefits in detail. Through dialogue with Perlinger Gemüse GmbH (Burgenland, Austria), they discovered activeIT and their Production Efficiency Control System, PECS.

activeIT ultimately proved to be the company that could best meet the requirements. We were very interested in using PECS for our purposes, as the system can also be customized to meet individual additional requirements. However, since we didn't have internal resources to pursue this idea, we hired one of the two university graduates. This is how we began expanding the project in 2018.

### WHICH PECS MODULES ARE BEING USED AND WHAT CAN BE SAID ABOUT THE PROJECT WORKFLOW?

**C. Immervoll:** First, we focused on personnel management (pecsWELCOME). Weyers GmbH, specifically Pakstation Venlo, was our first client to utilize ID scanners and document scanners for the initial registration of temporary workers. The functionality of signing hygiene documents and regulations was also used for the first time in this context.

After that, we implemented the associated time tracking (pecsTIME), which, in the case of Weyers, runs as an interface and not as a client. This primarily involves the pure tracking of personnel's attendance times and breaks. The working hours are recorded by specially installed turnstiles and imported into PECS.

The next item on our agenda was personnel planning (pecsCLIENT), and after a project pause, the focus has currently shifted to production and equipment control (pecsLINE) and the LiveApp. The LiveApp provides an overview of all processes and workflows in the company. In the future, all ongoing processes will be graphically displayed in real-time according to the processing progress. Additionally, the LiveApp offers a real-time overview of orders, goods receipt, goods dispatch, and employees.



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#### Who

- part of the Weyers Group
- packing hall with over 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>
- in operation since 2003
- packing & repacking of diverse products in various packaging forms & sizes

#### What

##### Production Efficiency Control System PECS

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

## PAKSTATION VENLO (WEYERS GROUP)

**S. Kamps:** I joined the project as a career changer and was initially assigned to personnel planning. Due to various circumstances, I had to find my way into the project independently and without a proper handover. However, with the support of my former supervisor and the assistance of Christopher Immervoll and the activeIT support team, I was able to familiarise myself with the subject matter quickly.

At some point, there was a standstill in the PECS project. Due to internal disagreements on certain matters, there were no significant developments during that time. I initially continued with the personnel planning in PECS. Now, I am responsible for the further development of the project and, most recently, the machine integration.

### HOW IS THE COLLABORATION STRUCTURED?

**C. Immervoll:** The collaboration with Mr. van Maren and Mr. Kamps is working very well. The development is progressing step by step. We are approaching the best solution by discussing implementations, updating everything, and then deploying it into the production system for immediate application. However, we first had to get to know each other and understand each other's working methods and thinking. Our collaboration has been a mutual learning process. Since we have learned from each other, everything is working very well.

**E. van Maren:** At the beginning of our collaboration, we experienced communication problems – we just didn't work well together. However, now that Sebastian is on board and we know activeIT better, everything has improved significantly, and we have made great strides forward.

**S. Kamps:** The on-site meetings have also allowed us to make significant progress, which would have likely taken much more time without them. During these meetings, we can discuss details and align our actions quickly. The discussed matters are implemented immediately and then reviewed. This face-to-face communication creates a certain momentum, making everything more efficient.

**C. Immervoll:** Mutual understanding has definitely improved through our on-site meetings. I would describe our collaboration as highly creative. Most of the time there is only a rough plan rather than a strict one that we follow. Such projects often don't follow a linear development process. What we have noticed with all our clients and projects is that once something is integrated and operational, other issues become visible that were not previously considered or planned for. These other issues require changes and decisions. As a result, projects often evolve in a slightly different direction than initially defined, which is quite positive. Creativity is crucial for this ongoing development process, and to discuss different implementation possibilities and how to map processes. This works very well with Mr. van Maren and Mr. Kamps.

**S. Kamps:** We operate around the clock, with the exception of two hours per day when packing is paused. For businesses that operate continuously, it can be a major problem when something doesn't go as planned outside the typical support hours of a software service provider. However, activeIT has provided a solution in this regard - we have always been able to reach someone. Regarding communication itself, I can say that we always receive feedback from activeIT, and problems are resolved quickly. While the root cause may not be addressed immediately, quick fixes are implemented to ensure continued work and production. This work process has shown itself to be very useful for us.



**Erik van Maren**  
Managing Director,  
Pakstation Venlo B.V.



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## WHAT DOES THE STAFF SAY ABOUT THE NEW WAY OF WORKING WITH PECS?

**E. van Maren:** We have a good team, and we are very satisfied with the time tracking, which runs excellently. As for planning, we cannot yet say if it works well. Unfortunately, in this area, we are not fully utilising all the capabilities that PECS has to offer, which is due to our internal processes. Sad but true – we are currently still doing the planning in Excel, and then the data is transferred to PECS. In future, however, we will definitely plan with PECS.

**S. Kamps:** Of course, a transition is never easy. Especially for our long-standing employees, it is challenging to adapt to the new system as they have been working differently throughout their careers. In general, when it comes to employee feedback, we need to differentiate between different areas.

Our personnel planner is currently facing some difficulties, mainly because he is not yet familiar enough with the pecsCLIENT functions, and there is a need for training in this regard. However, the HR department, including time tracking, is highly satisfied with PECS, and there is only positive feedback in that area. The same goes for the temporary staffing agency, which also works very well with PECS – there are no complaints there. Additionally, everyone is satisfied with pecsLINE in the production hall, although here too we are not yet using all the possibilities that have been specifically programmed for us.

## WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

**E. van Maren:** As already mentioned, we would like to plan with PECS in the future. We will start with this in the warehouse.

**S. Kamps:** In the warehouse, we have a smaller team of approximately 80 employees. Planning on a weekly basis is relatively easier in this environment compared to the Pakstation. Therefore, the warehouse would be a good starting point for our planner to develop a closer connection to the system.

**E. van Maren:** In general, our goal is to get the system up and running as originally intended. We want to achieve the defined objectives. Additionally, the BI tool can be an interesting aspect for us, as it allows us to collect and analyse our business data, thereby optimising our work processes.

Speaking of optimisation, as a company and as individuals, we will increasingly dive deeper into digitalisation and become more reliant on the system. Therefore, it is essential to have someone you can call at any time when issues arise. This will undoubtedly be one of the major challenges for the entire IT industry in the future.

**S. Kamps:** I see it the same way. We have a 2-hour time window during which no production takes place. Otherwise, packing operations run from 7 a.m. to 5 a.m. In the future, the entire software industry will inevitably need to find a tool that ensures 24/7 support.

## GUEST COMMENTARY



### Michael Spalek

Economic Delegate in The Hague for BENELUX, Advantage Austria

*"The Netherlands has a highly modern and competitive food industry. They are among the world's largest producers of fruits and vegetables and the second-largest exporter of agricultural products. In 2022, Austria exported IT services worth 302 million EUR to the Netherlands. This accounts for approximately 11% of the total service exports to the Netherlands."*

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