

TEN CATE ENBI

Satisfying the global demand for Technical components

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Roel Durlinger, IT DIRECTOR, TEN CATE ENBI

Founded in 1704 as a textile company in the Netherlands, Ten Cate Enbi now specializes in office and domestic equipment. It manufactures plastic and rubber components, parts and packaging for office products such as fax machines, printers, mobile phones and vacuum cleaners.

Ten Cate’s high profile customers include Rank Xerox, HP, Lexmark, Mitsubishi, Siemens, Philips and many other famous names. The company’s philosophy is to build factories wherever its customers operate and it has manufacturing plants in the US, Mexico, Hungary, the Netherlands, France, and Germany. It also has a plant in Singapore and it is expanding into countries such as Malaysia.

“Our aim is to be a global company with a local presence,” says Henny Ribbink, business manager for Plastic Products. “At present we operate from ten locations around the world and we employ over 1300 people. The local presence is very important to us and to our customers. It means we have very short lead times in delivering our parts to the customer. Most of our competitors just focus on one region!”

By operating globally, Ten Cate can take advantage of currency fluctuations and make local variants of products at highly competitive prices. “We keep diversifying,” adds Ribbink. “For example, we introduced a paint line in response to the popular demand for colorful covers on mobile phones. Then we moved on to making the plastic housing and now we do the assembly as well!”

Supporting an international business

The strategic and operational management of multi-location businesses such as Ten Cate, demands an accurate real-time view of all aspects of the operation.

To provide the necessary information, Ten Cate runs Glovia on three servers - located in the US, Europe and Asia. The Glovia system runs on Sun Solaris hardware, together with an Oracle database and Cognos management information tools.

“We use the Internet to provide a centralized service,” says Roel Durlinger. “If a customer places an order, we can see immediately if this product is in stock in, say, Mexico, Hungary or Asia. At the same time we can determine the price and the lead time for delivery!”

Across the product lines, Glovia enables Ten Cate to monitor profit margins and to fine-tune its pricing structure in response to competitive pressure, or changes in material costs and overheads.

“The information we get from Glovia isn’t used just for operations. It enables us to concentrate our efforts on the products with the best margins. So Glovia’s also a sales and marketing tool,” says Ribbink.

Global ERP

Ten Cate’s IT Director, Roel Durlinger says that the company is very positive about the use of technology.

“We don’t see it as an overhead. We know we have to get the right information to the right people at the right time.

And the only way of doing that, if you’re working on a global scale, is by using an integrated ERP system.

Glovia fulfils our needs in many ways - it's not just about capturing data and presenting information. Its multi-language and multi-currency capability is a major asset, for example. Users have screen displays in their own native language, so any information that is localized will be in the native tongue. And the multi-currency feature makes it easy for us to deal with customers and suppliers inside and outside the Euro-zone"

Equally important to Durlinger are the stability of the product and the level of support provided by Glovia, as Ten Cate has a relatively small IT group. The software has proved itself over many years, and with offices throughout Asia, Europe and the US, Glovia can provide local support at very short notice. "We like their approach," says Durlinger. "They share our business philosophy and we value their whole-hearted commitment."

E-commerce

Recent technology shakeouts have hit public confidence in the business-to-consumer (B2C) market, and Internet trading is patchy with some successes, many failures and just a few really profitable operations. Things are very different in the business-to-business (B2B) arena. "For us the Internet and B2B is really an extension of EDI," says Ribbink. "We had already implemented the infrastructure for running Glovia from multiple sites over the Internet, while some of our competitors were still using EDI as a glorified fax machine!"

"The advantage of Glovia is that it's fully integrated. We can enter sales orders from customers in their native language, and these are directly connected to the whole database, so we can respond to them very efficiently. We're now looking at Glovia's e-commerce modules for our ordering system"

When implemented, these will enable Ten Cate's customers to check order status on-line, 24 hours a day from anywhere in the world. "It will be an excellent customer service facility," says Ribbink. "They will have the same information that we're working from."

Acquisitions and forward planning

Ten Cate has a clearly defined buy and build strategy. It acquires and develops complementary businesses that extend its product range and market penetration.

"For this strategy to work you must have a flexible ERP system that you can adapt to new business models," says Ribbink. "We now have lots of different processes for supplying our GSM, printer, and small business markets and we find that it's very easy to extend Glovia to our new business operations. Glovia fits our way of doing things - not the other way round - and that's a key requirement as far as I'm concerned."

Looking ahead

In the future, Roel Durlinger believes that Glovia will form the basis for a centralized IT service within Ten Cate.

"I think they've chosen the right database with Oracle and we're already seeing integration with other applications. This means that Glovia will give us even better management information than we're getting at the moment. Eventually it could become a global IT center - a single source of information, accessible from anywhere in the world"

Ribbink agrees with this view, adding: "The fact that Glovia is now fully owned by Fujitsu gives us confidence in their stability and we can plan a long term future together."

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