

## PRESS RELEASE



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### IT works for De Poortere Frères

De Poortere Frères (Belgium) is now one of the leader manufacturers in the world of double velvet and flat woven fabrics for the upholstery market. Its strength comes from an optimal mix of product, price, quality and service.

We spoke to Mr. Guy Gyselinck, the manager of the IT department, to understand what role Information Technology took to support the company's winning direction. Let's look at the scenario.

#### A bit of history

The origins of De Poortere Frères (DPF) are situated in 1859 when Arthur, Camille and Henri De Poortere founded the 'De Poortere & Fils' by. A few events to outline the company history:

In 1929, Louis De Poortere was founded as 'Ets Louis De Poortere', specializing in the manufacture of carpets. In 1967, 'Ets De Poortere Frères' built a new mill, totally specialized in the manufacture of double piece acrylic velvets, and dyed on continuous lines. It was the first important expansion of the Company that kept growing till the beginning of the eighties.

In the nineties, 'Ets De Poortere Frères' had serious financial problems due to a strong competition from the Turkish velvets, especially on its major market, the United Kingdom.

New shareholders decided to invest in the company redefining its strategy, emphasizing on piece dyed fabrics. The complete yarn dyed collection was stopped to focus on volume business. In May 1996 started the production of polyester fabrics, which was an enormous success. Moreover it was decided to adapt the dyeing department to piece dyeing, while the weaving capacity had to be increased too.

#### The manufacturing activity

The turnover went from EUR 16,6 million in 1995 to EUR 52,4 million in 2003.

In meters, the evolution was even more spectacular and the total production went from 2,5 million meters to 10 million meter currently, while the work force increased to 370 persons.

The whole mill has been renewed: De Poortere Frères is now equipped with 94 double pieces Van de Wiele velvet looms and 24 flat weave Dornier looms, giving a monthly capacity of 1 million meter (75 % velvet, 25 % flat weave).

#### The markets

De Poortere Frères is the market leader in all European countries with the USA and Canadian markets now developed. The target is to be the lowest cost producer in pieced dyed upholstery fabrics. A new product line was launched in 2004 aiming at the development of curtain fabrics. As with the upholstery fabrics, the strategy was to enter the volume business with aggressive prices. The first results are very satisfactory.

Finally, research is done in wall covering fabrics that are becoming very trendy. The improvement of the mix product, price, quality and service remains the target of De Poortere Frères.

[www.depoortere.com](http://www.depoortere.com)



## Our interview to Guy Mr. Gyselinck on IT at De Poortere Frères

**Q:** What is the main SW application supporting your plant activities?

**A:** De Poortere Frères implemented the Datatex solution TIM, an ERP specific for the textile industry, a few years ago to support end-to-end manufacturing. All the process steps are supported by the implemented solution: purchasing, customer order entry, order confirmation, commercial planning (via warehouse availability) and production control (from warp, through greige fabric to finished dyed fabric).

The Datatex solution also allows standard cost calculations for all articles (individual as well as per family groups of articles) calculating contribution margins and indicating the production mix required maximizing profitability.

**Q:** What are the obtained benefits?

**A:** The main support to the company goals comes from the integration of information between the commercial and the production department. This drives a significant improvement in the customer service while keeping the inventories at a profitable level.

Moreover with our ERP we could implement a just-in-time approach along the whole supply-chain, starting from the yarn.

Most of the data is extracted in the data warehouse application Board that is a fine tool for statistics and decision support for the managers.

**Q:** And the Internet? Any use of it?

**A:** We have recently implemented the B2B module **e@cho** developed by Datatex using Object Oriented programming.

Our goal is to further enhance the customer service. And one of the key points of the customer satisfaction is to provide them with timely information.

Our application allows De Poortere Frères agents and customers to:

- ✓ Query on open orders
- ✓ Query on closed orders (Orders' history)
- ✓ Reports on open and closed orders
- ✓ Shipping report.

Our agents and customers can access the latest available data processed by our ERP. We believe that when the customer is correctly informed our relationship with him is closer and better. Moreover, our sales department is not involved anymore in giving this information and can focus on management of the critical situations.

The next planned step is the order entry using the Internet. It will not be a very big saving in terms of workload for us, but it will be a further improvement in terms of customer satisfaction and independence. Agents and customers will be able to enter their orders when and where they want and will have a direct control on the keyed data.

## Some info on E@cho from Marco Salvador, the datatex product manager

e@cho, the B2B module of NOW - Network Oriented World -, has been developed with the latest technology for enterprise WEB application. It is J2EE (java 2 enterprise edition) compliant. The product is Multiplatform (MS Windows Server, IBM iSeries, Linux systems, Unix systems) and Multidatabase (any SQL database, such as IBM DB2, Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server).

The customer is connected to the vendor through the Internet and accesses the application through an Internet browser. Therefore the solution is really inexpensive in terms of connection lines and hardware.

From the application point of view the functions most commonly deployed by e@cho users are:

- ✓ Order Entry
- ✓ Existing Orders Inquiry
- ✓ Order History Inquiry
- ✓ Reordering
- ✓ Stock Availability Inquiry
- ✓ Technical Documentation Download
- ✓ Master Files Inquiry.

The vendors' article codes and the buyers' article codes can be handled. Moreover it's possible to link documents to any article, such as multimedia files, Adobe Acrobat documents, Microsoft Word or spreadsheet files.

Each customer can see his open orders and each agent can see his customers' open orders. It's also possible to copy an old order and enter a new one updating it with additions and alterations (e.g. add new articles, create different quantities). This simple function can significantly speed-up the order entry.

The inquiry capabilities of e@cho are the trigger for a good customer acceptance of the application. These are the Article master file, the Customer master file, the Price lists, Order Delivery lines, Production plans, "WEB" warehouse inventory and availability inquiries.

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**Datatex** is the world's leader in manufacturing solutions for the textile and apparel industry, with over 350 satisfied customers in 35 countries around the world. The **datatex** ERP for textile is a suite of modules divided into the various functional areas of management such as sales, inventory control, manufacturing, planning, costing and quality management. The **Datatex** software for textile and apparel is totally adaptable to small and very large companies, producing any part of the supply chain from fiber to garment. Due to its extremely high degree of flexibility, the **datatex** solution can be set up to serve most any company in the industry with minimum modification.

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