

LANSA Case Study

RPO Automatisering releases advanced software for a fresh world

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RPO Automatisering BV in the Netherlands specializes in solutions for fruit and vegetable importers and exporters and real estate management companies. RPO completely redeveloped AGF/ng, its RPG and LANSA for the Web solution for the fruit and vegetable industry, with Visual LANSA. The new solution, Freshng Advanced Edition runs on Windows, iSeries and UNIX systems. In 2006, RPO signed an agreement with AgroFair Benelux BV, an importer and distributor of organic and Fairtrade tropical fresh fruit to use its Freshng Advanced Edition Software.

Paul van der Es, RPO's director of commercial affairs, said, "While AGF/ng had grown over the years and was well appreciated by our users, we wanted to expand our market share by supporting multiple platforms and multiple languages. LANSA's productive and flexible 4GL was the only tool that offered easy integration with legacy RPG logic plus portability to UNIX and Windows."

Building on 20 years experience

RPO has over 60 customers in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Spain, including AgroFair Benelux BV, Alexport BV, Bocchi Benelux, Fresh Partners Thailand, Jover BV, MarniFruit BV and The Greenery Organics.

The Freshng advanced edition from RPO represents nearly 20 years of market knowledge of the fruit and vegetable import/export and wholesale sector. Developed completely in Visual LANSA, it is the successor to RPO's widely implemented RPG and LANSA for the Web-based AGF/ng solution. Freshng's flexible architecture allows end users to adapt columns in, for example, their sales and purchase screens, to their own requirements. The solution also includes an integrated financial system that handles industry specific matters.

Freshng takes care of all the automation requirements as well as market specific tasks such as; a batch of fruit or vegetables can be traced from grower to auction and vice versa, allowing for calculation of commission for the grower and the exact cost price of each batch. Freshng's EDI facility helps to speed the entire import and sales cycle.

Freshng modules cover purchase and sales administration, inventory management, remote registration of batch arrival/dispatching, import/export documents, general ledger, accounts receivable and payable. Freshng includes eCommerce functionality that allows customers to place



orders and track orders over the Web and to update and read other information.

Cross platform deployment

Using LANSA V11 RPO developed a modern attractive solution with a small team of industry experts in a relatively short time that can be deployed on the server of the customer's own choice.

Paul van der Es, RPO's director of commercial affairs, said, "Because of LANSA's cross platform capabilities we can deploy Freshng on Windows, System i and UNIX. Our larger customers typically choose IBM's very robust System i platform because of its performance and high availability, while smaller customers prefer Windows. Giving those options to our customers has strengthened our market position."

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Wim Nienhuis, financial director AgroFair Benelux, said, "After a thorough evaluation we selected RPO's Freshng based on its very complete functionality. We also look forward to a long term partnership with RPO to work together on both current and future information technology opportunities in the fresh fruit industry."



RPO moves from RPG step by step with LANSA

This case study originally published in 1996.

“AGF/400’s speed of performance and facility to trace an order contribute significantly to the efficiency of our company.”

RPO Automatisering, a Dutch Software house, is one of the leading software specialists for fruit and vegetable wholesalers in Benelux. RPO faced the challenge of enhancing their highly successful import/export/wholesale package AGF/400 to keep up with ever changing business requirements and to move into new markets. LANSA provided RPO with a flexible, productive and portable solution that allowed them to seamlessly integrate new functionality with existing RPG programs.

RPO’s customers have also benefited from LANSA’s productivity and flexibility. Olivier van Assche from O. van Assche Import and Export S.A. (one of RPO’s Belgian customers) explains, “Within a few weeks of our agreement with RPO many of the customizations to AGF/400 were delivered. Three months later a fully modified system was up and running. AGF/400 contributes significantly to the efficiency of our company.”

“The facility to trace a batch of fruit or vegetables from a grower in, for example, Chile, to the auction in, for example, the Netherlands, is an important requirement of the fruit and vegetable trade,” explains Paul van der Es, RPO’s director of commercial affairs. “Growers usually receive a certain percentage commission from the actual sales (auction) price. Therefore a batch of fruit or vegetables needs to be traced back from auction to grower. A batch is also traced in detail to calculate the exact cost price. This includes the pro ratio cost of

“LANSA was the only AS/400 tool that offered easy integration with our existing RPG software, portability to Unix and Windows platforms and a productive and flexible 4GL.”

transport and insurance of, for example, a box of peaches. Once the goods arrive in the destination port, the sales transactions are typically completed within 24 hours. AGF/400’s EDI facility (Electronic Document Interchange) helps to speed the entire import and sales cycle. Because of this speedy 24 hour sales cycle we offer around the clock support to our customers.”

“AGF/400 originated on the IBM® System/36®,” explains Paul. “While it has grown over the years and is well appreciated by our users, its RPG base limited our ability to update it. We needed a better and faster way to keep up with the ever changing business requirements. We also wanted to expand our market share by moving the software to other computer platforms and by supporting multiple languages.”

“Therefore we decided to redevelop our software with a portable and more productive tool.” continues Paul. “We evaluated several AS/400 development tools. One of the tools was too inflexible and could not integrate with our existing RPG software. Another tool forced a standard look and feel to all programs that we did not like,” recalls Paul.

“LANSA’s productive and flexible 4GL was the only AS/400 tool that offered easy integration with our existing RPG software plus portability to Unix and Windows platforms,” says Paul.

“It is essential that we can gradually move from RPG to LANSA. We don’t have the resources to assign all our programmers to full time redevelopment of our software packages. The ongoing support to our customers is more important. The redeveloped LANSA programs integrate perfectly with the old RPG files and programs. So far we have redeveloped our financial modules completely in LANSA.”

“The move to LANSA gave our customers the immediate benefit of a client/server query and reporting extension.” adds Paul. “LANSA Client’s end user query and reporting gives a GUI where it matters most - data analysis for the end user. This graphical reporting extension saves us a lot of time customizing reports for individual users. LANSA Client’s GUI also makes AGF/400 query and reporting more attractive in demonstrations.”



Left Mr Jan Roozen, RPO automation Ltd and Right Mr Wim Nienhuis, AgroFair Benelux Ltd

Company and System Information

- RPO Automatisering BV is an IBM® Business Partner and IBM® authorized AS/400® Solution Provider. Most of RPO’s developers have an RPG and AS/400 background. Only four of RPO’s fifteen developers attended external LANSA training, the others were trained internally.
- In 1995 the total value of fruit and vegetable wholesaling in the Netherlands was 3.6 billion guilders (US\$ 1.87 billion). RPO has a significant number of the Dutch and other European fruit and vegetable wholesalers as customers. RPO has software packages for Fruit and Vegetable Wholesale and for Asset Management. These packages are available in Dutch, German and Spanish and are being used by more than 70 companies all over Europe.
- For more details on RPO visit their Web site at www.rpo.nl

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