



## Seeberger Boosts Sales Efficiency with Lawson M3

A long-established company in Ulm, Germany, Seeberger KG earns the major part of its revenue by marketing premium quality dried fruit and nuts. The electronic backbone of the company's business success is provided by the Lawson M3 collaborative enterprise application, the initial components of which were implemented at Seeberger in 1992. Since then, Seeberger has achieved rapid growth in sales.

"We've gained a clearer understanding of our business processes and greater transparency throughout all departments. Lawson M3 is making us more productive."

**Wolfgang Wagner, IT Manager, Seeberger KG**



## Business Benefits

According to Wolfgang Wagner, long-time IT manager at Seeberger, the most important effect of introducing the Lawson M3 system has been the improvement in the company's business processes. One example is faster order processing. He says, "Actually, we were fast even before the new system was introduced and it took us just two days to process an order. But now, the entire process takes only one day, and of course that boosts customer satisfaction."

Information exchange among all the departments has also been improved. "We've gained a clearer understanding of our business processes and a high level of transparency. Information and knowledge possessed by individuals is now available to every employee. Since everyone in our company has access to a computer or a display screen, all of our employees benefit by having their horizons broadened. The net effect is that we've all become more productive." Wagner says.

That is especially true in sales. One reason is the integration of Lawson M3 with Seeberger's sales information system. This software enables field salespeople to enter new orders right at the customer site and to transmit them to Seeberger by telephone on the same day. Wagner adds, "When these orders come in, they are transferred to Lawson M3. An order file is generated and the order acknowledgement is printed automatically. Conversely, field salespeople are always kept up to date since all current orders are sent via the Internet to an interface with the sales information system."

In addition to accessing routine sales information, each salesperson can check online whether the needed product is on order and how soon it will be available. In preparing a quotation, the salesperson can use this knowledge to give customers up-to-date information about possible delivery times. Other departments also benefit from Lawson M3. For example, laboratory employees can keep up to date on what the purchasing department is ordering and when, and prepare their test schedules accordingly.

## The Company

Seeberger KG was established in 1884 to buy and sell overseas goods. Today the company has 300 employees and its core business is the sale of dried fruit and coffee. Seeberger's customers include well-established mass retailers such as Spar, REWE, Edeka and Wal-Mart, as well as smaller retail businesses. As consumers have become more quality conscious, the company has established itself in Germany and other European countries as the market leader in premium-quality dried fruit and nuts as well as coffee. Seeberger is also a respected supplier of gastronomic specialties in southern Germany. Last year's sales amounted to approximately EUR 80 million.

Located in the Donautal (Danube Valley) Industrial Complex, the company turns over some 14,000 metric tons of dried fruit, nuts and coffee annually. Its product line includes about 50 different kinds of dried fruit in various types of packaging. Each of these must be tested, expertly stored and distributed. "Generally we purchase our high-quality dried and nut products once a year from the producers. We then deliver these to our customers at intervals throughout the year," Wagner explains. "To meet our quality requirements, we use highly qualified buyers as well as an in-house laboratory and a fully automated high-bay storage system with four temperature zones between 46 and 61 degrees Celsius and space for 20,000 pallets. Each item is automatically stored in the appropriate zone."

The nature of the dried fruit, nuts and coffee business poses a number of complex challenges for the company's ERP system. Most important among these is the need for system-wide multilingual capability, invoicing in different currencies, and efficient integration with the LFS 400 high-bay storage system as well as with the DocuWare document management system. Other business processes Lawson M3 has to handle include quality assurance, sales/marketing management, production control and EDI.

"We had a very competent Lawson consultant with whom we worked closely in rethinking and then extensively integrating our business processes into the system."

**Wolfgang Wagner,**  
IT Manager, Seeberger KG



"The graphic displays of complex data and processes as provided by Lawson M3 Explorer are often much easier to comprehend. As a case in point, the informative diagrams created by Lawson M3 are very helpful in complex production planning."

**Wolfgang Wagner,**  
IT Manager, Seeberger KG

In 1992, Seeberger began to replace its existing MASII ERP system. One reason was the fact that IBM had stopped further development of the system. However, there were other reasons as well. Batch tracking had become a legal requirement, the export business had grown, and the newly installed, fully automatic high-bay storage system had to be integrated.

## Why Lawson?

In the selection process, Lawson won out over MAS90, Steeb/SAP, Ratioplan, Lunzer&Partner, Spielmann and ExperTeam. According to Wagner, the principal reasons included the then newly developed AS/400 platform, batch tracking, comprehensive support of foreign currencies and multilingual functions, plus a compelling presentation by the Lawson consultant. Another key factor was the local availability of the Lawson consultants and programmers.

## The Implementation

The Lawson M3 implementation was preceded by thorough planning. "Our contact was a very competent consultant with whom we worked closely in rethinking and then extensively integrating our business processes into the system," Wagner explains. The replacement of MASII proceeded component by component. During the transition period, Seeberger used interfaces to any remaining MASII components. The thorough planning paid off as the conversion proceeded without a hitch, essentially on schedule and on budget. At the same time, the company introduced a new, fully automatic high-bay storage system and created interfaces from Lawson M3 to the inventory management system. During the entire conversion phase, which was completed in 1994, Seeberger was able to conduct its everyday business without problems.

## Future Plans

Today all users consider Lawson M3 an indispensable tool that delivers important information across departmental boundaries because of its high level of integration. The initial objectives defined at the project's launch in 1991 have been met. For the future, Seeberger is considering the acquisition of additional modules to expand requirements planning, production planning and budget planning.

## About the Solution

Interfaces presently exist to the inventory management system, sales information system and document management system. An EDI converter has also been installed. An AS/400 S20 computer with an OS/400 operating system and a DB/400 database serves as the platform for Lawson M3. About 80 employees are using the system at the corporate site in Ulm. Most of these computers run a 5250 emulation, but some Twinax terminals are also used at locations used strictly for data entry. According to Wagner, the company will be gradually converting to Lawson M3 Explorer because, "The graphic displays of complex data and processes as provided by Lawson M3 Explorer are often much easier to comprehend. As a case in point, the informative diagrams created by Lawson M3 are very helpful in complex production planning."

Lawson M3 supports the following processes at Seeberger: order entry, inventory management, quality assurance, sales management, production control and EDI.

Platform: IBM iSeries (AS/400) running OS/400 and DB2/400.

**Headquarters:****USA**

380 St. Peter Street  
St. Paul, MN 55102-1302  
Tel +1 651 767 7000  
info@lawson.com

**Regional Offices:****Americas**

Brazil, Chile, Canada,  
Mexico, Honduras,  
United States, Venezuela

**United States**

Tel +1 651 767 7000  
infous@lawson.com

**Asia**

China, Hong Kong,  
India, Indonesia, Japan,  
Korea, Malaysia,  
Philippines, Singapore,  
Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam

**Singapore**

Tel +65 6788 8769  
Fax +65 6788 8757  
infoasia@lawson.com

**Australia & Oceania**

Australia, New Zealand

**Australia**

Tel +61 2 8437 5600  
Fax +61 2 8437 5699  
infoanz@lawson.com

**Northern Europe**

Denmark, Estonia, Finland,  
Norway, Sweden

**Sweden**

Tel +46 8 5552 5000  
Fax +46 8 5552 5999  
inforndic@lawson.com

**Northwestern Europe**

Belgium, The Netherlands,  
Ireland, South Africa,  
United Kingdom

**United Kingdom**

Tel +44 1344 360273  
Fax +44 1344 868351  
infornw@lawson.com

**Central Europe**

Austria, Czech Republic,  
Germany, Hungary,  
Poland, Slovakia,  
Switzerland

**Germany**

Tel +49 2103 89060  
Fax +49 2103 8906 199  
infoce@lawson.com

**Southern Europe**

France, Israel, Italy,  
Portugal, Spain

**France**

Tel +33 1 34 20 80 00  
Fax +33 1 40 39 25 07  
infosof@lawson.com

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

## About Seeberger KG

Seeberger KG was established in 1844 and is still based in Ulm, Germany. The company has 300 employees and achieved sales of approximately EUR 80 million in 2001. In addition to mass retailers such as Spar, Wal-Mart, REWE and Edeka, Seeberger also supplies smaller retail companies including delicatessen and health food stores. Seeberger's core products are premium quality dried fruit and nuts, and the company has become the market leader for this product group in Germany and other European countries.