



## ZUIDNATIE DRIVES LONG-TERM SUCCESS AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE WITH ORGANI AND PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Conducting a successful business in Europe's second largest port— the fourth largest in the world, requires efficiency and agility. With containers accounting for more than 40% of maritime traffic at the Port of Antwerp, having a streamlined process for moving containers through the customs process and onto their final destinations is imperative for long-term success and achieving a competitive edge.

This idea of optimization is at the heart of Zuidnatie's business strategy. With more than 135 years of experience in cargo handling, Zuidnatie continues to be one of the highest performers in the Port of Antwerp. Comprised of numerous companies all active within the logistics market, Zuidnatie offers complete and tailor made logistics services in all areas of cargo handling at state-of-the-art facilities, including forwarding (movement of goods between two locations) and warehousing, container logistics, and management of customs documentation and formalities.

For over 20 years, Zuidnatie has relied on solutions from Progress Software partner Organi to manage activities associated with its logistics, warehousing and accounting operations. "The fact that Organi knows our business intimately is a critical component to our relationship, explains Marc Stijleman, CFO of Zuidnatie. "Our business is very complex; one minute we are handling a dangerous product with a heavy weight and the next a normal container with a normal pallet product. Specific characteristics of the shipment have to be communicated through the various channels to get the products from one side of the world to another. And then of course, the process is further complicated by industry regulations. So it is a tremendous benefit for us that Organi knows these critical aspects of our business. Other software companies lack the industry expertise to meet our needs and deliver a customized solution. But over the past two and half decades, Organi has continued to evolve its solutions to meet the unique needs of the market and help us maintain our competitive edge."

## EVOLVING MARKET DEMAND REQUIRES EVOLVING, STATE-OF-THE-ART TECHNOLOGY

After many years, Zuidnatie decided to upgrade from its previous COBOL-based Organi solution, Bevex I, to Bevex II, based on the Progress OpenEdge platform, to take advantage of new functionality and deliver greater efficiency to the business. During discussions with Organi, however, Zuidnatie learned of the company's plans to develop a brand new application called the Organi Logistic System [OLS]—a totally integrated Progress-based solution that would deliver more functionality, flexibility and automation



### CHALLENGE

*Continue to evolve and maximize its existing operations to meet market and customer demand*

### SOLUTION

*The Organi Logistic System [OLS] developed for the transport, warehousing and logistics markets*

### BENEFIT

*Reduced total headcount by onethird and resources dedicated to the customs handling process by 50%*

to Organi's customers. Excited about the project and the implications for Zuidnatie's business, the company opted to collaborate with Organi on the design and development of the new product.

Stijleman explains: "OLS promised to be a state-of-the-art application combined with high stability, availability and performance. It would have the capacity to handle the specific kind of traffic we deal with, the automation to streamline and maximize our operations, and the flexibility to customize the solution to meet the changing needs of our customers. We were excited to be part of this modernization project and to have a voice in the direction of the solution." Zuidnatie had very specific requirements for OLS:

**Flexibility to Manage Complex Business Requirements:** First, the new system needed to be extremely flexible to handle a variety of products and attributes, i.e. raw materials, hard materials, large and heavy weight materials, light materials, etc. The system also needed the flexibility to manage the complexities of Zuidnatie's business. For example, a container of coffee may come off a ship at a certain weight. But after two weeks of storage in one of Zuidnatie's warehouses, much of the water originally in the coffee could evaporate, changing the weight of the product. Lastly, Zuidnatie needed the flexibility to accommodate a wide range of possible characteristics. For example, one customer may want materials tracked by lot number versus another customer that wants items tracked by pallet or serial number.

**Integration with Other Internal and External Systems:** A second key requirement was the OLS' ability to integrate with other solutions and systems, including its existing Progress-based and Microsoft look-and-feel accounting system. While Zuidnatie would create invoices in OLS, it needed the ability to update the Microsoft system with the relevant information.

**Automation of the Customs Forms Management Process:** The company was also looking to streamline operations and improve accuracy levels by automating its manual-based customs management process. Because employees were required to physically go to a customs office to process customs paper work, the movement of containers could be delayed for up to four days in the manual system. The automated customs management process promised to eliminate the delays caused by the manual process allowing cargo passage in hours rather than days.

**Enhanced Reporting:** A fourth requirement Zuidnatie had for OLS was enhanced reporting. With a fully integrated system that includes a datawarehouse, OLS would provide increased visibility and analysis across Zuidnatie's various companies and operations—enabling the organization to make necessary adjustments to maximize operations and its ability to service its customers.

## A HIGH AVAILABILITY, VIRTUALIZED INFRASTRUCTURE ENSURES 24X7 OPERATIONS

"'Sorry customer...our system is down,' is a wrong and unacceptable answer for Zuidnatie," says Marcel Dubourg, CEO of Zuidnatie. Consequently, after the deployment of OLS, Zuidnatie decided to move to a totally new, high availability, virtualized infrastructure. The company is close to completing the process which will have two separate sites. The on-premises system will be fault tolerant, with built-in failover capacities in the case of technical interruption or an unforeseen disaster. "We needed 100% assurance that there is no downtime or disruption in our business," says Stijleman. "By splitting our infrastructure between two sites, we can be sure that even in the face of the unexpected we will continue working and communicating with our customers. And the ability to promise our customers that we run a 24x7 business—no matter what—is also a significant competitive advantage for us."

OLS will offer support for forwarding, inventory management, finance/tariffs and invoicing, and customized reporting. In addition to OLS, Zuidnatie is using Organi's OLS Customs for automating the customs process, OLS for managing container logistics, and for finance




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CFO  
Zuidnatie

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and accounting. Zuidnatie has completed implementation of the logistics component of the solution. It is now in the process of finishing the paperless office, the company plans to leverage the digital information system that is already in OLS, and it will implement modules for analytical reporting to provide even more insight and flexibility.

## INCREASED EFFICIENCY AND VISIBILITY DELIVER IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

### **Improved visibility and control over operations**

With real-time reporting and access to detailed analyses across its organization, Stijleman says they now have a greater understanding of and control over what is happening across Zuidnatie's operations at any given time. And the company is able to provide its customers with detailed reports on things like stock listings or movements listings. Where Zuidnatie once had to rely on Organi to create its customized reports, it can now quickly and easily develop and generate custom reports on its own.

### **Flexibility to meet customer requirements**

The flexibility of OLS has greatly improved the registration process. Every product Zuidnatie handles has its own parameters and characteristics. For example, a food product may require a stock or lot number, whereas coffee requires a warrant number. Before OLS there was no consistent method for registration, which made tracking and administration far more tedious and difficult. Today, Zuidnatie has standardized the registration process, enabling registrants to input all necessary data using the same process. The company can now easily track and modify characteristics of any product at any moment to fit their specific need.

### **Doing more with less through automation**

Stijleman says one of the most significant benefits of OLS has been the integration with customs reporting requirements. "This entire process has become paperless. Today, we can input information into the OLS Customs system which, via EDI, will then connect directly with our customs Ministry of Finance. We receive validation within a matter of minutes. Where we once had to wait up to four days to move a container until the paperwork cleared customs, we are now moving containers within the same day of arrival, sometimes within the same hour. In fact, the process is so streamlined that we have reduced the number of employees involved with the customs process by 50%."

The ability to integrate OLS with its accounting solution has greatly simplified administration. The entire process has been automated, resulting in greater process efficiency and higher accuracy levels. OLS has also enabled the company to generate consistency across its paperwork. All documents printed out of OLS appear in the same layout—reducing confusion and miscommunication.

As with all logistics organizations, Zuidnatie felt the effects of the economic crisis. "Just like everyone," says Stijleman, "we were forced to do more with less. But that process was far less painful than it would have been without OLS. For example, with the automation and new efficiencies afforded by the system, we are executing all of our customs-based activities with only one-third of the resources required previously—and we are doing so without any disruption to our business."

Zuidnatie's ability to maximize its internal operations has garnered the organization AEO [Authorized Economic Operator] certification. To achieve its certificate, Zuidnatie had to undergo a complete audit of its internal work flows. With its AEO status, Zuidnatie has been deemed a proven, secure member of the international supply chain and identified as a reliable trading partner in terms of availability, efficiency and compliance.




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***"The automation and new efficiencies afforded by the system enabled us to reduce our headcount by one-third without any disruption to our business."***

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***"Year after year Organi proves itself to be the best fit for our organization and the most capable of delivering significant competitive advantage to our business."***

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## A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO ONGOING SUCCESS

The relationship between Zuidnatie and Organi has evolved over the years into one of collaboration and consultancy. "Organi is not just a software vendor to us, but a true partner committed to our success. They have made a concerted effort to establish relationships at every level of our organization—operational, administrative, management, etc., which has given them even greater insight into our unique challenges. And whatever the issue or question, we know we can rely on Organi to provide the required support." Even though Zuidnatie has partnered with Organi for over 20 years, Stijleman says the company is always looking at the market and comparing other options. "But year after year Organi proves itself to be the best fit for our organization and the most capable of delivering significant competitive advantage to our business."

### ABOUT ZUIDNATIE NV

Founded in 1870, Zuidnatie has more than 135 years of experience in cargo handling, continuing to be one of the highest performers in the Port of Antwerp. Zuidnatie offers complete and tailor made logistics services in all areas of cargo handling at our ideally located and state-of-the-art facilities. [www.zuidnatie.be](http://www.zuidnatie.be)

### ABOUT ORGANI



Organi offers a unique combination of vertical applications and services to different markets, including retail, wholesale & manufacturing, transport, warehousing & logistics, bailiffs and bookkeeping & finance. For more than 30 years, Organi has helped executives in these markets to increase their productivity and profits. The continuous effort in developing high-end applications makes Organi one of the most important Progress partners in the Belgian area. In 2010, Organi received the Fastest Growing Partner award from Progress. [www.organi.be](http://www.organi.be) In 2010, Organi received the Fastest Growing Partner award from Progress. [www.organi.be](http://www.organi.be)

### PROGRESS SOFTWARE

Progress Software Corporation (NASDAQ: PRGS) is a global software company that simplifies the development, deployment and management of business applications on-premise or in the cloud, on any platform or device, to any data source, with enhanced performance, minimal IT complexity and low total cost of ownership.

### WORLDWIDE HEADQUARTERS

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