

# Levarht Embraces Aptean Food & Beverage ERP as Critical Component in New Business Strategy



## Industry

Food & Beverage

## Challenges

- » Many different workflows and processes operating within siloes
- » Not enough availability of information, making it hard to make informed decisions

## Advantages

- » Insight and space for collaboration across all processes
- » Solid basis for business transformation and further growth

Netherlands-based fresh produce company Levarht recently successfully went live with their new ERP solution, Aptean Food & Beverage ERP *Foodware Edition*, effectively setting the foundation for further business transformation and growth.

“Strategy and IT are inextricably linked,” Dimitri Mayer, CIO at Levarht, says. “So it’s not just about IT, but also the business strategy and organizational change that fresh produce companies are going through. You need to make sure that you get a grip on your processes and work to make them more efficient. In the end, it’s all about the availability of information and being able to steer it. And that really requires a change in the way we work.”

A central theme and basis for the business’s transformation was internal cooperation. There were many different workflows and processes operating within siloes at Levarht, which meant that it was critical to know and understand the impact that any changes made would have further down the chain.

The project was therefore started with collaboration as a high priority. With so many different people in different roles, communication and attention to the human factor were extremely important to be able to really sell the merit of the organizational change to the entire staff.





“All employees across all departments were involved in the process,” says Mayer. “We created a test site with production lines and pick locations and re-enacted all processes, customer interactions and escalations for 4 months. We set up, tested and optimized these processes and defined the role of IT through this process together with Aptean.

“It really requires a different way of working, but thanks to Aptean Food & Beverage ERP, there is now insight and space for collaboration across all processes,” he concludes.

The organization also made some structural changes to suit the new approach.

“In addition to the implementation of a new ERP platform, we’ve made other changes as well: the management, managers and the IT team have been reconfigured,” Mayer explains. “Integration platforms have been set up and integration tools have been created, including tools for better collaboration with our growers. And finally, several data teams have been created: a Master Data team for product data, a Reporting Team for operational and financial steering information and a Data Science team focused on predictive data.

“The latter is busy developing prediction models to gain a better grip on the quality, sales and supply of products,” he continues. “In 5 years, fruit and vegetable trade may look completely different, which is why it is important to focus on supply chain integration and increase its predictability. There is real progress to be made there.”

The condensed timeframe of the implementation—21 months, half of which was during a period of remote work—was possible thanks to an approach that focused on agility. Throughout the entire process, progress continued at a regular pace and never stalled because Levarht decided to begin the deployment with a small part of the company and went live in that division after 7 months. This reduced complexity and made training more manageable, and this method turned out to be a very successful way to implement the solution for the rest of the company without any problems.

Throughout the process, Levarht made sure to involve key individuals from both their team as well as Aptean's team.

"You need the expertise to translate the technical possibilities and limitations for how the fresh produce business works today," Mayer says. "We did this together with the organization, the management, the steering committee, and Aptean."

With the choice of Aptean Food & Beverage ERP, Levarht also chose Microsoft.

"That trade-off was actually very simple. Microsoft offers a proven, integrated data platform with all kinds of applications to leverage that data," says Mayer. "It is also recognizable, flexible and user-friendly, and therefore very accessible for us as users in the office and in the warehouse. That was something that was very important in the adoption of this solution for our organization.

"In addition, we found that we needed a partner that could be flexible and really understood the interests of Levarht," he continues. "This requires the provider to act with agility to achieve the intended result. And Aptean did just that."



"The foundation has been set with the new software platform, and now the focus is shifting more and more towards leveraging the **available capacity and productivity.**"

**Dimitri Mayer**, CIO, Levarht

Joris Kolff, regional account director at Aptean, was involved in the implementation at Levarht.

"Many large food and fresh produce companies often choose to transition to a new software platform all at once because they feel like they have to," Kolff says. "The special thing about Levarht is that the project began with a very clear strategy, and IT and the ERP were key components of it. There was less talk about features and functionalities; it was more about defining what they want to achieve, what the collaboration should look like and how they could be even more successful.

"During the process, there was plenty of time to discuss our progress and adjust as necessary. It wasn't always easy, but because we had a common goal in mind, both parties were able to keep the focus on that. It has helped enormously to work from success to success, and that certainly contributed to the record time Levarht set. It felt less like a marathon and more like a journey completed through several sprints," he concludes.



As far as Levarht's future ambitions, Mayer feels like the sky is the limit.

"Thanks to the automation and organizational change we're going through, we can do more with the same people," he says. "The foundation has been set with the new software platform, and now the focus is shifting more and more towards leveraging the available capacity and productivity.

"How can we further optimize productivity in the warehouse? How can we further leverage integration with growers? How can we expand our partnerships abroad? We now have that invaluable insight into our processes, and that will allow us to steer them. In addition, we'll continue to implement organizational changes in the coming years in order to ultimately achieve our efficiency goals and growth ambitions," he concludes.

If you want to learn more about what Aptean Food & Beverage ERP could do for your food business, **contact us today.**



## Are You Ready to Learn More?

Interested to see how Aptean Food & Beverage ERP can help you better manage your food company?

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