

The success imperative

Essentially the secret to Prophet's success in the fresh produce industry is its philosophy of offering several products by only using one code structure set. "As technology progresses, we develop the code accordingly to ensure that all our products are in line with the latest technologies," said director JD van Wyk. "Clients have the benefit of regular upgrades as per their needs - weekly, monthly or annually. Any software changes are reviewed once a year and clients are upgraded to keep their systems in line with technological trends. These upgrades constitute part of the annual licence fee."

Before implementing the software, Prophet does a work flow analysis, analysing each person's job in the chain. Recommendations are made to management and the software is

implemented once these are signed off. Van Wyk emphasised that the work flow analysis was immensely valuable as a business structuring tool.

"Our software also has been so successful because we allow clients as much power as possible," he continued. "We provide training so that they can write their own reports, access the front end of the software to change functions, screen look and feel, logos and import third party information."

Established in 1989 in the United Kingdom, Prophet offers least cost to operate supply chain software designed with industry specific know-how for the fresh produce industry. Almost 84% of its clients are involved in fruit and vegetable exports, 12% in the fresh-cut flower industry, 2% in nuts and pulses and 2% in the canned drinks and wine

industries. With 300 sites world-wide, there are clients in the UK, east coast of America, South Africa and Ireland.



A true partner

Reflecting the increasing integration of Prophet with Microsoft's family of server, database, office productivity and business application products, the company was awarded Microsoft's Certified Partner status in October.

On what the accreditation meant for the company and its clients, Prophet UK technical director Steve Wade commented, "We've always embraced Microsoft technology and Pr2 and QX are the result. The accreditation shows clients, both prospective and new, our long-term commitment. Certification provides us greater access to Microsoft people, allowing us to continue developing and releasing state-of-the-art technologies to the fresh produce industry."

According to Wade, the way forward is working to achieve other competencies and particularly achieve Gold status during 2008. He continued, "The longer term aim is to embed Pr2 into the Vista/2008 environment. In this way, Pr2 will be an extension of the Windows experience, environment and suite of applications - from CRM to Office to Performance Point Server and others."

Receiving the accreditation was no mean feat. Pr2 was certified as a Windows 2003 application, running successfully on this platform by working carefully within Microsoft's guidelines and framework. Wade explained, "We then had to get customer references to vouch for the many successful implementations. Prophet also had to demonstrate a commitment to this process in the future."

Going places



After moving into brand new offices at Somerset Links Office Park in Somerset West in August, the Prophet team is settling down well. Director JD van Wyk explained that the move from Audas Street became a necessity after Prophet bought 5 Degrees in 2006. "With 18 employees currently, we needed to cater for future expansion. Our prime products QX and Pr2 are making inroads into the fresh produce industry and we have to be ready with ever-faster service and backup," he said.

New deals

With four new QXprophet users on board, Prophet SA is rapidly expanding its client base. The four are: Umlimi Agricultural Services, Graaff Packaging, Expofrut and Chennels Farm Holdings.

Headed by ex-Dimension Data's Malcolm Rutherford as chairman and backed by Soto Ndukwana of Ifula Holdings and Newline Property Investments CEO Chris Nissen, Umlimi started its business in citrus farming. Today it offers a comprehensive support base to export fruit,



cane and grain industry producers. This support base concentrates on improving grower returns, ranging from sourcing investment capital and on-farm production assistance, to managing marketing and the post-production value chain. Delivering specialised grower services, the organisation's business units are: treasury and financial services; marketing and exports; and commercial agricultural support services.

Expofrut RSA, the South African commercial and marketing arm for the Belgium-based Univeg Group, procures additional fruit for the group import companies and trades own and procured fruit with the firm price markets. Univeg, one of the largest fresh produce distributors in the world with a turnover of €2 billion, operates in 22 countries.

Ceres-based Graaff Packing is one of the leading packing facilities in the area. A subsidiary of third-generation family business Graaff Fruit, the high-tech facility is both BRC- and GlobalGAP-accredited. Over the last five years, Graaff Packing has been handling several new peach, nectarine and cherry varieties.

As one of the biggest grapefruit exporters in South Africa, Chennels Farm Holdings plays a leading role in the South African citrus industry.

Fresh tradition

As one of the gold sponsors at the allFresh! 2007 conference in September, Prophet intends to continue the tradition in years to come. "Being one of the



Prophet directors Paul Bailey and JD van Wyk at the company's conference stand

largest fresh produce summits for role players in the fresh produce industry, it meets our target market needs one hundred percent. It certainly is a good forum to entrench the QX and Pr2 brand awareness," stated director JD van Wyk.

Good forum

For the fourth year in a row, 50 delegates from around the country attended the recent annual QXprophet User Conference in Gordons Bay. With 24 perishable product exporters now using this powerful pre-built turnkey solution in South Africa, the conference has become a necessity for exchanging ideas and information. The product offers trading and operational functionality that delivers seasonal planning, vessel planning, 'what if' to market cost and profit, electronic data

exchange with pallet stock reconciliation, logistics management, receiver/grower returns and account sales.



Safpro's Craig Jensen, Prophet MD Paul Stofberg, Carel de Ridder and Lean van Biljon, both from Market Demand Fruit.

Wishing all clients and associates a fruitful Season!

From the Prophet team



Address Oakmont Building, Somerset Links Office Park, De Beers Ave, Somerset West 7130
Tel +27 (0)21 852 9521 Fax +27 (0)21 852 8714 www.prophetize.co.za

Editor: Mariette Greyling Tomar Communications 021 5540442 mariette@tomar.co.za