

RETAIL AND FASHION

SUCCESS STORY

Fashion retailer, The Sting, delights end-users with on-trend mobile apps

Increasing company turnover by 10% with real-time insight into stock, all while surprising employees and customers with improvements and user interfaces they love.

Company Snapshot

The Sting was born in Tilburg and raised with Brabant geniality. They started here in 1982 with one store and have since grown into one of the largest fashion retailers in the Netherlands. With their formulas The Sting, Costes and Cotton Club they now have more than 140 stores in the Netherlands and Belgium and 3 webshops.

THE STING



Industry Focus

Retail and Fashion

Timeline

6 months

System Version

SAP Retail System, ECC 6.05

Function Scope

Mobile and Web

Number of Users

350 Internal users, 2,000+ customer users

Devices

Desktops, tablets, and smartphones



Retail and Fashion



Challenges

- Old terminals could not support new online ordering
- Needed a sleek and modern UI to match company culture
- Wanted a solution that utilized in-house skill sets



Solutions

- "Build by Example" approach
- Small pilot to gather feedback and make changes before full release
- Deliver consistent UX across all apps



Benefits

- Real-time insights into stock and what is selling when
- 10% reduction in turnover time
- Immediate notification if errors occur
- Minimal training time to navigate tools
- Enthusiastic end-users

The Success Story

Challenge: Meet the modern wants and needs of fashion retail

When management at the international fashion retailer The Sting wanted to offer the merchandise available in its stores online, its IT team knew it was time for new technology.

Old handheld terminals used in stores to handle logistics operations – goods receipt, stock transfers, inventory management, and the like – were unable to provide the functionality that employees needed. And an initial, disappointing foray with an app service provider was abandoned before rollout.

That's when the team began looking for a better mobile solution to make the most of its existing SAP capabilities, and the project Mobile Applications for Retail In-store Operations (MARIO) was born.

With 85 stores across the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, and the United Kingdom, **The Sting sought to provide modern, sleek devices and apps that matched the company's culture as a hip and contemporary retailer** on the cutting edge of fashion.

And just as The Sting designs all of its own clothing brands, the company sought a platform that would enable it to build its own SAP mobile apps using internal resources, rather than rely on a third-party developer.

Neptune Software's low-code rapid application development platform stood out for several reasons, as did Neptune's strategic partner, Zebra Technologies.

“Number one for us was the Neptune team's experience as SAP consultants, with deep knowledge of SAP programming,” said Ricardo van Wamel, application manager at The Sting. “The ability to create Fiori-based apps quickly was also a deciding factor.”

“As an SAP developer, I know how to manage backend development, yet moving to Fiori for the front end posed a potential challenge,” added Dave van de Ven, application manager. “Fortunately, with Neptune's drag-and-drop features, I'd be able to create an app very quickly. In mere seconds, I could put something on the screen.”

And since Neptune makes it easy to take advantage of existing backend SAP functionality without requiring any additional hardware, The Sting felt confident it had selected the best platform to build elegant, user-friendly apps quickly.

The Sting also chose Zebra Technologies for its rugged, professional-grade handheld TC70 Touch Computers that would **help employees communicate and access information in real-time on the shop floor, in the back room, and in its distribution center in the Netherlands.**

Solution: Build by example, enlist feedback often

The Sting took a “build by example” approach to getting started, commissioning Neptune Software to build its first app, a picking and collecting tool for online orders. That gave the team an invaluable example to work from as it moved forward.

Another key success factor? The team was given ample time by management to deliver improvements. With that support, **the team moved forward, with the goal of building an intuitive, convenient logistics app that would delight store employees and management alike.**

The IT team surveyed employees at four pilot stores to understand their user's needs, asking about the capabilities they would like to see, how they'd like to use the apps and devices, and the way they use apps generally.

“A benefit of Neptune Software is that it limits how complex an app can be, which helps to deliver a consistent user experience,” said van Wamel. “That also made it easy for us to quickly develop all of the new apps that we needed to bring to our stores.”

To swiftly navigate its learning curve while ensuring the apps met high-quality standards, The Sting had Neptune Software review new apps, provide feedback, and recommend improvements prior to their implementation.

Neptune Software

The logistics apps were rolled out to users in the four pilot stores, who offered insight on ways to improve it to meet their needs. Once those recommendations were addressed, the team implemented the apps company-wide, to great success.

“One of the nice things about Neptune Software is that it just works. You build the app on the Neptune platform and publish it out to users, no hosting partner is needed,” said van Wamel. “And when we have a question or problem, Neptune responds immediately, often with a custom-made solution, rather than just an answer. Their support is fantastic.”

Indicium helped implement a wireless platform in stores to ensure the Zebra TC70s were able to communicate within and across sites. Remote control capabilities have made it easy for the IT team to manage and update the scanners centrally.

“The Zebra touch computers are a huge improvement for people in our stores,” added Eric Bollen, team lead, SAP application management. “They’re durable and they scan items so easily, making them so convenient for users.”

Results: Enthusiastic users, better customer service

“Being able to offer a complete package of apps on the new devices was a huge win for us. **With Neptune and Zebra Technologies we have a stable, highly usable system that we can update easily.** And our employees have adopted these new tools with enthusiasm,” said Bollen.

“With little training, they’ve navigated the new processes and tools with ease.

Customers also like that store stock is available for online sales, which is really important in our industry.”

With the ability to sell online stock in the stores and vice versa, turnover at The Sting has improved at least ten percent.

Inventory errors have also been greatly reduced. **Today, when an employee scans an article, if there is an error it is noticed immediately, and inventory is more accurate, which in turn improves customer service.**

“Users may not always know what’s possible with a new tool and may not know what capabilities to ask for. We took the approach of surprising and delighting our users. Even small things are important,” said van de Ven.

For example, a mobile turnover app that was built for individual stores and management reduced their reliance on hourly emails for insight on how quickly products were selling.

Replacing a tool that went offline for maintenance regularly—and left teams in the dark about sales—was a simple improvement that improved management’s insight...and made them happy in the process.

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About Neptune Software

Neptune Software is a rapid application development platform vendor with more than 660 enterprise customers and over 3.5 million licensed end users globally that empowers IT departments to deliver tangible business outcomes. Neptune Software offers with its Neptune DXP, a leading low-code, SAP-centric, enterprise app development platform to digitize and optimize business processes and user interfaces – at scale and with ease. Neptune DXP provides a fast and cost-effective way to industrialize the development of custom applications - saving companies time and money on development, integration, and operations. More info at: www.neptune-software.com