

CASE STUDY

TOI-TOYS MOVE FOR OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

“InRule has provided us with ease of mind. Time management has been dramatically improved, as well as our time to market. As for compliance, InRule is on a completely different wavelength in contrast to spreadsheets.”

Bart Daams, Regulatory Affairs & Compliance Manager



Founded in 1991, Toi-Toys International is one of Europe’s largest importers and exporters of affordable toys for over 28 years. Its customer base comprises larger and smaller clients all over Europe, including retail chains, wholesalers, shop owners and food-service establishments. Albeit its success over the years, Toi-Toys has remained a true family business, something which it takes great pride in.

NEED FOR A VIABLE SOLUTION

The rules and regulations in the toy-wholesaler industry are extensive. An accelerated pace of change forced Toi-Toys to face the challenge of streamlining its processes. It decided to focus on improving customer intimacy and satisfaction, and operational excellence, as well as creating a data-driven business. When launching a new toy, the product in question has to go through approximately fifty steps before being released on the market. Steps focus extensively on quality assurance – understandably so. With end-users being children, the company must ensure safe products.

SPREADSHEETS ARE GREAT – BUT NOT FOR EVERYTHING

Purchase processing was the first InRule application that Toi-Toys turned to. Previously, process management was done using Excel, with transparency non-existent to speak of. Equally problematic was the inability of the spreadsheet application to enforce compliance. The apparent upside of Excel is that most everyone knows the basics. However, a company like Toi-Toys soon becomes burdened with hundreds of files that require maintenance and updating. This leads to reliance on those individuals that created the spreadsheets. Spreadsheets often reflect different ways of working. Should a particular individual get sick or move on to another company, the knowledge of that specific spreadsheet moves on with that person and is lost to Toi-Toys.

WHY INRULE?

Toi-Toys spent quite some time, searching for an effective project management solution. After months of researching and trying different solutions, InRule was selected. It fit the company’s needs – like a hand in glove. Crucial was its ability to construct flowcharts, using low code for constructing applications that were tailored to Toi-Toy’s ways of working. Typical of an SME, no in-house developers were on hand. Another

“With manual ways of working, you’re bound to miss steps in the process. InRule helps ensure full compliance and effective process management.”

Bart Daams

“Previously, each department saw only its own piece of the machinery, whereas now, we work as a team, with everyone taking responsibility for the entire process. Even at an operational level, colleagues can ask questions about lead times of specific steps.”

Bart Daams

aspect that helped drive the decision to use InRule was the platform’s flexibility. Its functionality, which allows for swift adaptation in constructing tailored business applications was a game-changer for Toi-Toys. This had the company immediately recognize that InRule was the right choice.

ENSURE COMPLIANCE

When all processes were moved to InRule, Toi-Toys was able to start documenting, optimizing and tweaking its ways of working.

Without InRule, Toi-Toys believes it would still be using spreadsheets, with the number of different files to keep track of growing out of hand, and exponentially.

TRANSPARENCY ON THE GO

Before using InRule, each unit focused solely on its own area of responsibility. However, since implementing InRule, Toi-Toys has increased the transparency of its processes, making the entire machinery visible for all employees to see. Having a wider picture of what’s happening in the company has given employees a greater sense of responsibility for the whole process.

This has been a huge revelation for Toi-Toys and has evolved its ways of working, as well as making the lives of its employees easier. Being able to ask a colleague about lead times may sound trivial but in reality, this means a smoother business, working together toward a common goal. Toi-Toys also discovered an unexpected benefit of using InRule: the ability to follow a specific product’s entire lifecycle before its final destination on the shelf.

“An unexpected benefit was the transparency in locating a specific product in each step of the process. Whereas previously we had to ask a specific team of the whereabouts of a product, we now just look in InRule and immediately discover its whereabouts.” [Bart Daams](#)

Flowchart software is common for companies in this industry. The major drawback of flowcharts, however, is that they often simply end up as visuals on a wall: tactical visuals not embodied in the rest of the

organization.

“Unlike flowchart software, InRule actually enforces ways of working. With a flowchart on the wall, people may look at it, maybe once or twice – end of story. With InRule, you get the full picture – where you are in the process and everything that’s going on around you.” [Bart Daams](#)

SWIFT IMPLEMENTATION – EASE OF USE

With just a team of 3 representatives from Toi-Toys and 2 from InRule, Toi-Toys was able to move swiftly. It took just 8 weeks, from the moment Toi-Toys contacted InRule to implementing the first application. Contrast that to implementing, for example, an ERP system, and you see that the time saved is simply

“I was incredibly impressed by how knowledgeable the InRule experts were and how quickly they were able to understand our needs and processes. After spending just half a day together, they got it 95% right – astonishing!”

Bart Daams

“When implementing software that enforces a way of working, you often get post-implementation feedback that someone thought they worked in one way – when in reality, they worked in another way.”

Bart Daams

enormous.

One thing that became apparent when looking at the first application iteration was that experience and reality don't always match up. This is one way of actually scanning the processes and making sure it's documented correctly.

Moving from manual ways of working and spreadsheets to digital process automation is obviously not a small step. Toi-Toys relied on InRule experts to implement the first purchasing process application. After that, without the help of any in-house developers, Toi-Toys managed to build a second, third, fourth, and soon, fifth application – all on its own!

Constantly on the lookout for ways of improving, Toi-Toys is continually finding new ways to streamline its processes. And with InRule's ease of use, the company can carry out these edits itself.

“We can build applications ourselves and we know what's happening. That's a huge advantage for us. In contrast, if we were to see something that could be optimized and we had to wait for external help, we'd lose our agility as a company.” [Bart Daams](#)

This way, Toi-Toys is able to tweak its applications within the hour, even without possessing any former background in developing business applications.

“I'm not an IT expert in any way but it didn't take long before I could figure out InRule. Once you get the hang of it, it's actually quite easy.” [Bart Daams](#)

FLEXIBILITY, LOW-CODE + API'S

Toi-Toys immensely appreciates 3 outstanding functionalities of InRule: its flexibility in modeling processes, its speediness, using low code and its ability to link to other systems – e.g. BI tools via APIs. Together with other essential software solutions, Toi-Toys today uses data and information from InRule, which is then converted to actionable insights.

The data collected and analyzed is used for process mining its own performance. This represents a way of measuring performance and identifying areas for improvement.

“We pull data from InRule into our BI tool, which give a great view of throughput and overall performance.” [Bart Daams](#)

It also provides Toi-Toys with an overview of its operations; for example, if a particular unit is overwhelmed and how that affects lead times. Always able to access real-time data of a specific product and calculate precise deliveries, this invaluable information helps the company fulfill its vision of increasing customer satisfaction.

Delivery precision is of the utmost importance for Toi-Toys. If a customer starts promoting a product that is expected on a certain date and Toi-Toys fails to deliver, hefty fines are imposed. With improved delivery

“Since implementing InRule, both lead times and delivery precision have improved greatly. Lacking such transparency into the process earlier, we now have confidence we’ll be able to deliver on time. This is one the greatest advantages InRule has given us.”

Bart Daams

“Delivery precision is one, if not the most important, KPI we have. Thanks to InRule, we’re in control of this process. It gives us great peace of mind!”

Bart Daams

precision, the company can steer clear of these unnecessary costs.

VALUE SURPASS EXPECTATIONS

Moving from spreadsheets to a digital platform has changed the very core of its operational business. Toi-Toys used to spend countless hours, chasing down data on different spreadsheets – a challenge obsolete today, thankfully replaced by the use of actionable data, just a click away.

Positives identified by Toi-Toys:

- Peace of mind through compliance
- Approximately 20% shorter lead times
- Increased delivery precision
- Improved time to market – strategically and tactically
- Greater transparency throughout all processes
- Time savings from working smarter
- Stronger competitive edge

“In your proposition as a wholesaler, backing up your promises is crucial. InRule empowers us to keep our promises.” [Bart Daams](#)

Almost 95% of all toys on the market, even in Europe, are produced in Asia. By streamlining the process for customers and quality assurance, Toi-Toys is able to compete with retailers that purchase toys from Asia firsthand. As mentioned earlier, keeping promises and delivering on time is fundamental for a wholesaler.

“InRule didn’t just match our expectations, it exceeded them. We’re extremely satisfied with the results we’ve gained from the platform.” [Bart Daams](#)

NEXT STEPS

As a toy wholesaler, Toi-Toys buys the majority of its products from Asia. Dealing with suppliers is not always without challenges. Using InRule, Toi-Toys is looking into creating tailored environments and applications for its suppliers. If such an application proves successful, it will also start inviting customers into similar environments and workflows.

Likewise, Toi-Toys will make it easier for new employees to hit the ground running, by starting them up on an onboarding application. It will also ensure everything goes according to plan when someone leaves through the use of an offboarding application. The possibilities are endless!

Eager to learn more, Bart Daams has set his mind on gaining greater knowledge and a deeper understanding of the platform, with the aim of streamlining the business even more. We look forward to following Toi-Toys’ journey in operational excellence and improving customer satisfaction. We are absolutely certain Toi-Toys will succeed in its endeavors!

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