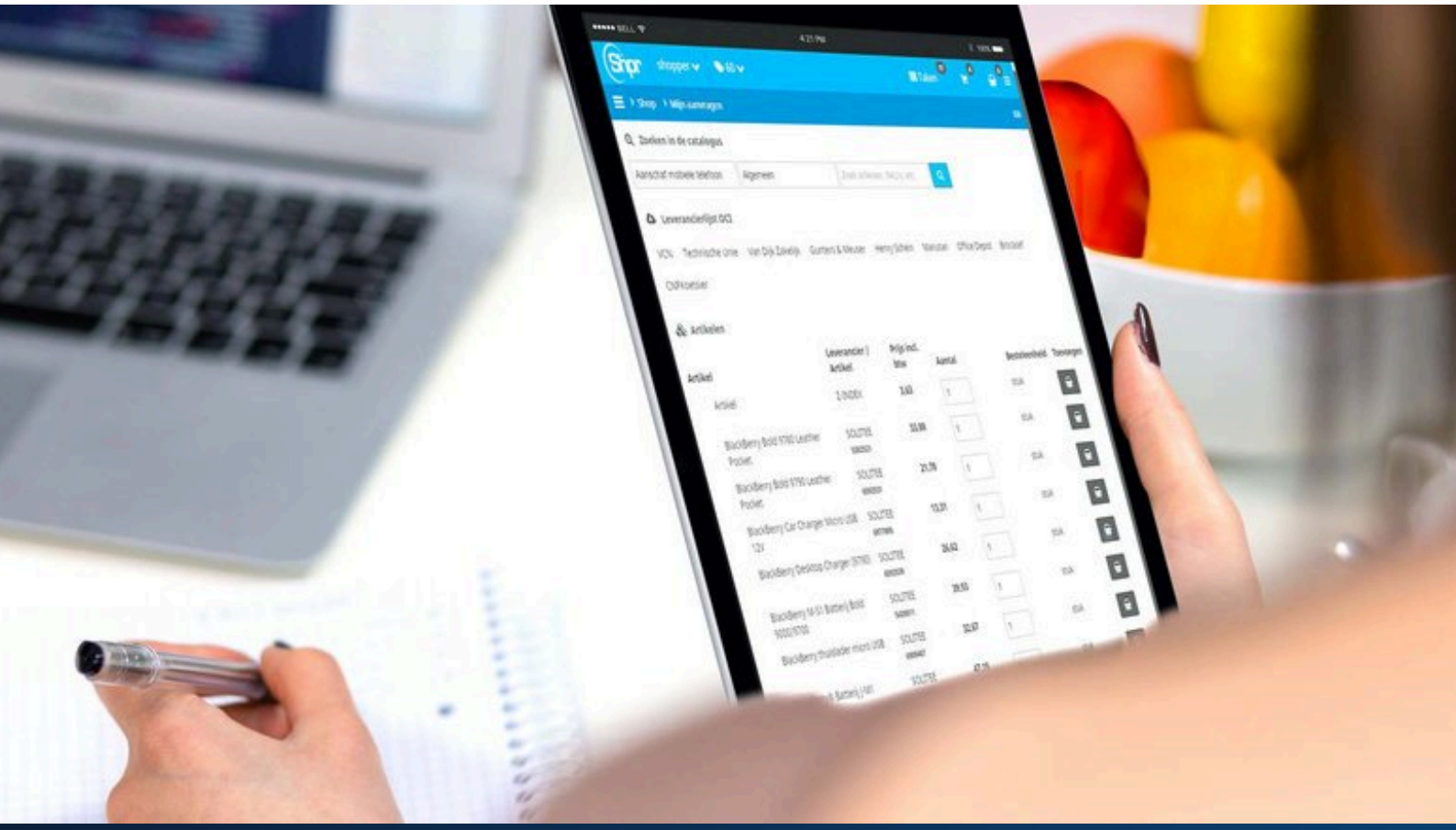


CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

INDEPENDENT SOFTWARE VENDOR · PROCUREMENT SOFTWARE

Archifact

USoft low-code under the hood of the Archifact procurement software

Archifact has been a provider of custom software based on USoft's low-code platform since 1997. For one of the customers, this was a Purchase-to-Pay (P2P) solution that integrates seamlessly with Exact and other financial ERP systems. Due to the high demand in the market for such a solution, this product has grown to become the standard purchasing software package Shpr.nl. Archifact also developed into an Independent Software Vendor (ISV). The driving force behind this success: the business rules approach of the USoft low-code platform.

- **Development of custom software for customers based on business rules**
- **USoft also under the hood of Shpr purchasing application**
- **With a small team, developing custom products as well as supplying standard software**

01

THE CHALLENGE

Tooling that allows you to automatically generate software without coding

Archifact (Adaptive Information Technology) was founded in 1997 by four colleagues who worked closely together during their time at publishing house VNU. De Wolff: “We were looking for a development specification method for software in the early 1990s. Higher programming languages arose at that time with which you could automatically generate front-end screens. Our thinking was: can't we develop a tool with which we can also generate the logic ourselves? We came into contact with USoft and together with them, we laid the foundation for what is now the Rules Engine in USoft.”

THE SOLUTION

02 The Business Rules Engine in the USoft platform supplemented with an interface generator developed by Archifact

Archifact has built its own software factory based on the USoft platform. In that factory, software is generated fully automatically based on the business rules that a business analyst provides as input. “This means we make the information provision independent of processes and procedures,” says Rooijers. “In this way, we give customers more say and control over their own software.”

Business rules are rules that you draw up in ‘ordinary language’. The big difference of this approach from all other software development methods is that each business rule is recorded only once, in a central Rules Engine. An example of a business rule is: ‘Charge VAT high 21% / low 9% rate on all invoice amounts’.

Other software development methods focus on the process, Rooijers outlines. “If you automate processes, you will discover that you will be recording the same business rule in many places in your software. In an ERP package, for example, the VAT rule appears in hundreds of places. If the VAT rate is increased or decreased, then you have to adjust the software in all those places. If you forget it in one place, your entire process is messed up.

However, if you record the VAT in a business rule, then you only need to adjust one business rule in the event of a VAT change, and the software changes automatically.”

Software factory that generates its own code

Thanks to the ease with which the GUI and APIs also change immediately, Archifact has also developed its own generators in addition to the USoft low-code platform. “Because if you change the VAT in, for example, a custom ERP system, then the interfaces to other software packages that do something with VAT must also be changed. Such as your purchasing software and your CRM suite,” says De Wolff. “For that reason, our software factory consists of two ‘departments’: the USoft low-code platform with which we realize complex back-end software. And an in-house developed integration platform that we use to adapt all the interfaces that the relevant software has with other packages.”

> By using business rules, we make the information provision independent of processes and procedures. In this way, we give customers more say and control over their own software.

KR

Kees Rooijers
Manager Research and Development at Archifact



Difference from ‘regular’ low-code

The business rules approach is also the major distinction from other companies that develop software on the basis of low-code or no-code. “We have been using the USoft low-code platform since the 1990s, explains Rooijers. “Since then, the software has undergone extensive further development. The difference between the USoft approach and other low-code platforms is that the latter are based on the process model, while the USoft platform uses business rules. With other low-code platforms, you keep automating a process, and you encounter the problems I just described. Although you can speed up the development process because you no longer have to write code yourself, your software becomes more maintainable if it is developed in low-code on the basis of business rules.”

Shpr application developed in low-code

Archifact developed a Purchase-to-Pay (P2P) application for a customer who works with Exact in the backend that connects seamlessly to their financial system. Because P2P processes are very generic, this software has become an application that can be configured for 99 percent of companies and that fits in with their own P2P processes.

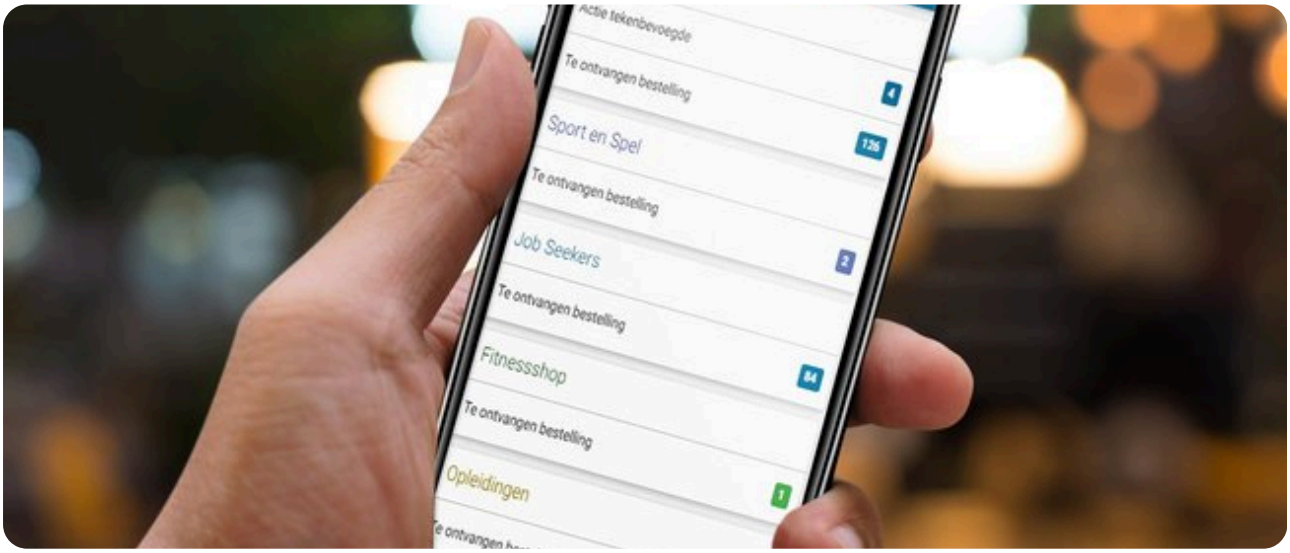
“That is why various Exact partners asked whether they could not also sell this solution to other customers," says head of Commerce Jeroen de Wolff. This is how Shpr (pronounced: Shopper) was created as a standard application.

The great thing about Shpr is: if there are companies that are highly dependent on their purchasing and think they can achieve distinctiveness with their P2P, Archifact can easily add those specific and distinctive business rules to Shpr, without the need to develop a whole new custom package.”

> With the USoft low-code platform, we can work for very diverse and large customers, automating their core processes.

JW

Jeroen de Wolff
Chief Commercial Officer at Archifact



THE RESULT

03 With this software factory concept and their compact team, Archifact serves large customers with both custom software and the purchasing software Shpr.

Archifact serves large customers through the business rules and software factory concept approach. “Our business consultants can develop scalable business software themselves. Moreover, they only need to enter the distinctive business rules in the Rules Engine. Because the standard rules that occur at many companies are already included. For example, the VAT rule. Once the business rules have been implemented, our ‘software factory’ does the rest. We do employ software engineers. But they focus on improving the factory, not on developing applications,” says Jan de Wolff.

> Thanks to the business rules approach, we at Archifact serve large customers with our software factory concept and a compact team.

JW

Jan de Wolff
Director at Archifact

Not industry specific

Jeroen de Wolff adds: “This approach allows us to work for very diverse and large customers, such as ArboUnie and the mental health organization Arkin, for which we automate important parts of their core process. This is possible because it does not matter to us how the processes in a particular sector run exactly. For us, only the business rules are important. These business rules are partly sector-specific because they are determined, for example, by legislation and regulations, such as the complex claim rules in healthcare. But to some extent they are also company specific. Because it is precisely with their business rules that companies can distinguish themselves from their competitors. We can quickly convert those distinctive business rules into working software.”

Many new customers are now coming into contact with Archifact through Shpr. Jeroen de Wolff: “Good examples of this are the Fit for Free gyms, the Rent Assessment Committee and the Cyclus waste management company. Many of our Shpr customers are hearing about business rules for the first time and are interested in the possibilities of the custom software we can provide.”

Partnership of two mutually reinforcing companies

The gentlemen are very happy with the collaboration with USoft. De Wolff: “The company is in Dutch hands and business rules form the core of their platform. Because therein lies the unique strength of USoft. Our technical people and the engineers at USoft have exactly the same vision, we reinforce each other.

Sometimes we come up with something that USoft will include in its platform. And we, in turn, make optimal use of all the functionality that is in the platform. We are also a loyal beta customer, because we test new developments and provide feedback on them. In short, it is not a customer-supplier relationship, but a close partnership.”

ABOUT USOFT

The **rules-first platform** for business-critical operations.

Automate your operations with **full trust and control**. **Adapt** when your business demands it.

Rules govern every process and every decision. USoft helps you capture these business rules before software is created. Our engine ensures your rules are always enforced: no exceptions and fully traceable. Change your rules and your software stays in sync, everywhere. Whether people or AI build your software or act on your data, everything plays by the rules. All running in your ecosystem of choice.

We help organizations put their rules first: captured in natural language and enforced in every transaction, across people, systems and AI. Ready to change at the pace of your business.

We envision a world where organizations know exactly what their systems do and why, so people and AI can build the future with trust and confidence.

Clear rules you can trust. Results you can audit. Change you can control.

For more information, please visit **usoft.com** and **community.usoft.com**

USOFT