



Delivering
Intelligent Business Solutions
To **World-Class Retailers**

ibs **DEALS**
ibs **REFERENTIAL**

Provera France delivers measurable results using ibs **DEALS** from Soft Solutions – **Case Study**

Shortly after its creation, **Provera** France realized that it needed an advanced business information tool to support its vendor negotiations. Working closely with Provera, Soft Solutions successfully implemented its ibs **DEALS** application and its ibs **REFERENTIAL** retail data model on a very aggressive timeline. Today, over 6,000 suppliers and 300,000 items are managed with the new system, which supports 59 Cora hypermarkets and 156 Match supermarkets.

CASE STUDY

“Thanks to Soft Solutions, our two core systems were rolled out in less than a year and a half.”

Jean-Robert Desherault, general manager of Provera France’s food division.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

The Louis Delhaize group found itself facing a considerable challenge in their French market, where it had previously shared a purchase center with the Casino group. Provera France was created to manage Louis Delhaize’s French activities, which included the purchasing activities supporting the Cora hypermarket, Match supermarket and Ecomax discount brands. The new entity faced the urgent need for significant improvements in their information systems. More specifically, the business required an integrated solution to support vendor negotiation across all of their brands.

THE SOLUTION: ibs **DEALS** and ibs **REFERENTIAL** FROM SOFT SOLUTIONS

Recognizing that the Casino-designed tool used prior to its formation would not meet its new requirements, Provera turned to Soft Solutions. Soft Solutions had previously implemented its comprehensive solution, ibs **DEALS**, at Provera’s Belux and Hungary purchasing centers, and Provera was pleased with the value it delivered to their business.

Complicating the implementation at Provera France, however, was a very tight timeline for the project. The solution had to be implemented in six months to support the critical September-October supplier negotiation period. In order to meet this very aggressive deadline, Soft Solutions deployed additional trained consultants and tightly managed all aspects of the project. This was all the more remarkable since Provera’s very specific business model required Soft Solutions to add a new component, Contract Editor, to its base application. This new functionality is now offered as a standard part of ibs **DEALS** for customers with similar business requirements.

"Soft Solutions worked closely with us at each step of the project, particularly with the customization required to support our center's work processes," explains Jean-Robert Desherault, general manager of Provera France's food division.

"Our business is about negotiating with suppliers, drawing up contracts, billing trade funds and accurately posting them. These are simultaneous processes that must be carefully coordinated. Today, all these tasks are managed by ibs **DEALS**, which has become the major tool for our activities. It, in turn, is connected to our accounting systems to ensure timely data consistency." added Jean-Robert Desherault.

During the implementation of ibs **DEALS**, Provera France realized that it also needed a retail master file for managing item, supplier and price data. The group turned again to Soft Solutions and selected its ibs **REFERENTIAL** in January 2003. "We required an integrated master file in order to have a single shared data source for all our banners," explains Desherault.

While the time frame for implementing similar integrated solutions usually takes several years, Provera's objective was to be fully operational by June. Provera France and Soft Solutions mobilized their resources, including over 60 people from Soft Solutions who worked closely with the Provera staff. The objective was met, with ibs **REFERENTIAL** going into production in May 2003.

"It was a major challenge, implementing a fully operational solution, and in record time, to boot," underlines Menour Lounes, ibs **REFERENTIAL'S** Manager at Provera France. "We exist in a business environment that requires speed, and Soft Solutions' ability to react to our needs was quite satisfactory." Today, ibs **REFERENTIAL** is enabling Provera France to support over 6,000 suppliers and their respective price lists, which have grown from 200,000 items to over 300,000 items. A single entry simultaneously updates the information systems of 59 Cora hypermarkets and 156 Match supermarkets in France.

"When the separation from Casino took place, it could have been predicted that we would need several years to have our new information system fully implemented. Thanks to Soft Solutions, our two core systems were rolled out in less than a year and a half" beams Desherault. "Soft Solutions empowered us with an extremely comprehensive ibs **REFERENTIAL** that is perfectly suited to our needs. Implementation was rapid, and exceeded our expectations!" Desherault continues.

This tight collaboration continues, as Provera France is currently working on extending ibs **REFERENTIAL** to their Caribbean operations. According to Desherault, Provera France is considering enhancing its information systems infrastructure further by implementing other application modules from the Soft Solutions Suite. Having generated significant return on investment to Provera France, the partnership between Louis Delhaize Group and Soft Solutions was recognized at the 2003 Retail Trade Show in Birmingham, UK as the "Retailer/Supplier Partnership of the Year".

ABOUT PROVERA

Created in September 2002 by Louis Delhaize retail group, Provera France is the purchase center for all of its banners in France (59 Cora hypermarkets, 156 Match supermarkets and Ecomax discounters) and in the Antilles (4 Cora, 17 Match and 52 Ecomax). The European Louis Delhaize group also supports two other purchase centers, Provera Belux, and Provera Hungary, as well as several other banners operating in Belgium, Luxembourg, Hungary and Romania. Its yearly sales are approximately 11 billion euros.

ABOUT SOFT SOLUTIONS

Soft Solutions is a leading provider of web-based retail merchandise management and decision support software. Our customers are multi-divisional, multi-format Tier 1 retailers and suppliers including Carrefour, CVS, Canadian Tire Retail, Capelli New York, Auchan, Group Louis Delhaize, B&Q, Kingfisher, Pinault-Printemps-Redoute, and Galeries Lafayette. Soft Solutions ibs **SUITE** conforms to the latest industry and technology standards, including GS1, and is compatible with multiple databases and industry application server packages. With consistent delivery of measurable top and bottom line business results, Soft Solutions is uniquely positioned to provide global best practices and industry-leading solutions for the fast paced, competitive environment of retailers worldwide. For more information, please connect to www.ibs-softsolutions.com

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