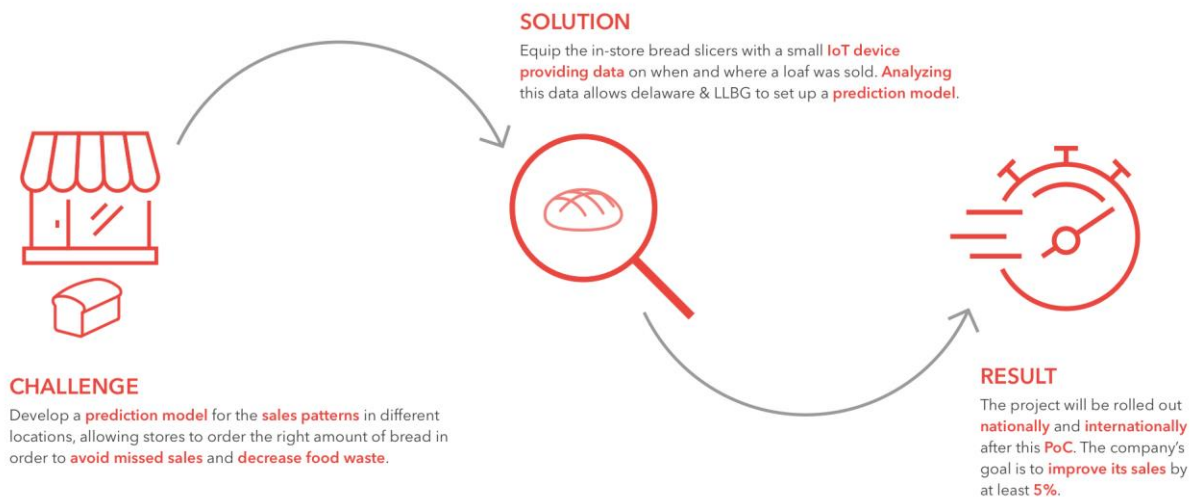




Our daily bread: how La Lorraine Bakery Group uses IoT to grow sales

Does this sound familiar to you? After a long work day, you're rushing to the supermarket to get some bread, only to arrive at an empty shelf. For La Lorraine Bakery Group (LLBG), these missed sales are a major source of frustration as well. As part of a [DEL20 project](#), LLBG IT manager Bart D'haese went looking for ways to improve the coordination between supply and demand. The company's goal is to improve its sales by at least 5%.

If you, like most people, regularly eat bread, chances are you've already had a taste of LLBG's passion for baking. Every single day, this family-owned Belgian bakery company provides countless supermarkets and bakeries with delicious breads and pastries in all flavors and sizes. "Clients can send in their orders until 3:30 PM the day before," explains Bart. "Our team of over 3,800 people then makes sure we deliver early the next morning, so stores can greet their customers with that delicious scent we all love."



1 Decoding the sales pattern

But what about the not-so early birds who are confronted with empty shelves, or head to the checkout line without their loaves of preference? "Our goal is to be able to present people with a representative assortment of bread, no matter the time of day," says Bart. "To make this possible, we needed to get clear insights into the sales patterns in different locations."

Bart and his team presented their challenge to delaware, LLBG's long-time ERP partner. Together, they decided that the best way to tackle this was to equip the in-store bread slicers with a small IoT device providing data on when and where a loaf was sold. "Analyzing this data would allow us to better align supply with demand, but it would also enable us to provide our clients with insights on when to order more. Another important benefit is that it helps us eliminate food waste."



“We need to co-create more intensely to achieve true innovation. It helps to have a partner like delaware to rely on: they’re not trying to sell a product but are focused on successfully tackling a business challenge. Their input has been invaluable.”

- **Bart D'Haese, IT manager at La Lorraine Bakery Group**

2 Communication challenges

As straightforward as it sounds, the project – which, at the time of writing, is in its pilot phase and will soon be industrialized – came with its fair share of challenges. “The first challenge was finding the right IoT technology to establish a stable communication between the bread slicers and our analytics environment. The first device we used had a simple switch design, but this proved to be unreliable. Thanks to delaware, we found a better option that tracks vibrations instead.”

Another challenge wasn't technology related but had to do with communication. “We had to find a way to communicate the project not only to the clients – who had to consent to us tracking data from their stores – but also to our sales representatives, who were used to a more intuitive approach. That's why we're putting a lot of effort into being transparent. After all, the solution benefits everyone, from the people buying the bread all the way to the store and to LLBG.”

3 How business and IT break bread

Recently, LLBG has expanded the project from the initial number of 3 to 20 stores in an effort to increase the scope and value of the data, and thus the prediction model. In the coming months, the goal is to roll out the model on a national and even international level.

For Bart, this project is a prime example of how business and IT can work together to realize a shared vision. “We need to start co-creating more intensely to achieve true innovation,” he says. “It helps to have a partner like delaware to rely on: they’re not trying to sell a product but are focused on successfully tackling a business challenge. Their input has been invaluable.”