

REPORT

—agilesFood Iberia

CLICK AND CONNECT

The creators of a new mobile-based online marketplace for the fresh produce industry believe it has the power to revolutionise the way produce is traded globally. Established in November 2016, FruitsApp is described by its founders Carlos Iborra and Esem Alzate as the first bidirectional business-to-business marketplace for the fruit and vegetable sector.

It uses artificial intelligence and algorithms and bots to connect buyers and sellers all around the world, thereby streamlining the trading process, avoiding intermediaries and saving time, resources and money for the companies involved. And by connecting all the actors in the chain, FruitsApp raises the visibility of even the smallest company, enabling it to reach a better deal.

"Carlos had been working for a number of multinationals within the industry for more than ten years. He observed that by communicating via costly and inefficient means such as telephone calls and fax, sellers were losing out on the best deals as they had no way of reaching all potential buyers to compare options," explains Elena Molinaro. "Thanks to our algorithms we know who is selling an apple and who is looking for apples and we connect them through an interactive map that they have in their personal profile."

The logistics are also integrated, meaning that at the end of each transaction the app provides various options of companies that cover a particular route.

Companies register to use the site for free and are charged a small commission on each transaction and logistics route. In addition to the basic service, FruitsApp offers extra services – such as demand, price and trend forecasting – for premium users at a fixed price. Sellers joining the platform are required to upload proof of GlobalGAP, HACCP or other accreditation systems, while buyers have to undergo solvency checks before they can use the service.

There are already over 1,400 companies registered on the private network, including Carrefour, Spar, Coop, Dia, Edeka and Fresh Del Monte. Most are located in Spain, but a growing number are based in other countries in Europe and South America.



LEFT & BELOW— Christian Segá and Jordi Calavera say Barcelona was the natural choice for the new company because agiles already has a customer base in the city

A new link in the chain

BARCELONA—The establishment of agilesFood Iberia in Barcelona comes in response to growing demand for IT solutions among Spanish produce companies.

by Maura Maxwell

German company agiles has brought its IT solutions within easier reach of Spanish fruit and vegetable companies with the opening of its new division, agilesFood Iberia, in Barcelona earlier this year.

The Hamburg-based software specialist has been working with fresh food companies for a number of years, but this represents the

first time it has opened an overseas branch dedicated exclusively to the fresh fruit and vegetable industry in a specific country.

The move comes in response to increasing demand for software tailored to the needs of fruit and vegetable companies within Spain – agilesFood’s biggest market outside of Germany – and brings the company closer to the country’s





biggest wholesale markets in Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid, as well as to producers across the country.

The new company is headed up by Jordi Calavera, whose company Ingravika has been agilesFood's local partner in Spain for the past seven years. "We chose Barcelona because we already have several customers at Mercabarna but more importantly that is where Jordi and his team are based," explains agilesFood Iberia's chief executive officer Christian Sega. "Jordi is from Barcelona and has extensive knowledge of the local fresh produce industry, so it seemed the perfect fit."

Calavera says that setting up the new division will allow the company to provide an even more spe-

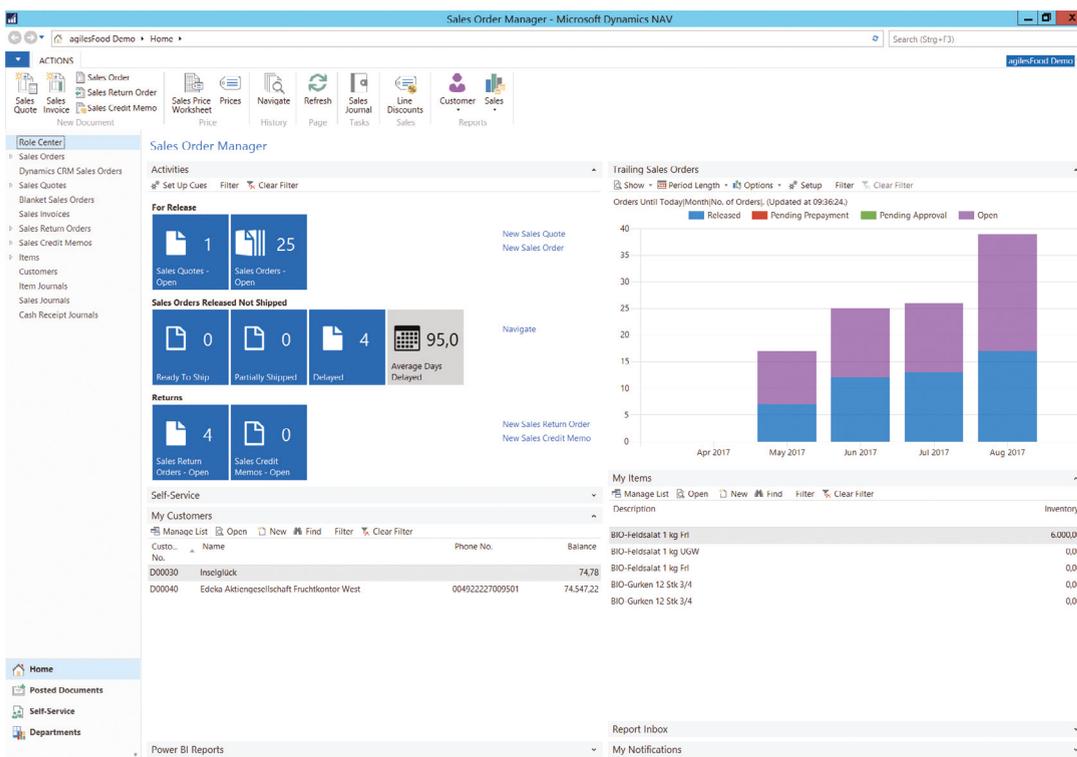
cialised service to its customers in Spain. "Obviously being located where our clients are provides two great benefits: cultural proximity and a faster response time to any incident," he says. "Our new business project with agiles allows us to specialise even more in a market where it already has extensive experience."

The founding of agilesFood Iberia is part of the group's wider expansion strategy that will see

further planned overseas openings in the coming years. With customers in ten continental European countries, the company now has the UK and US markets within its sights. The company has a strong vertical industry focus and its aim, says Sega, is to expand organically through strategic collaborations with local partners in various target markets.

Inventory management tools offered by the company cover virtually all processes including batch accounting, traceability, best before dates, order processing and packaging. One of its key advantages is that it uses Microsoft software, making it easy to implement and giving it a level of integration that other proprietary products cannot match. The platform is based on Microsoft Dynamics 365 Finance and Operations (formerly known as Navision or Dynamics NAV). It is very scalable and easy to adapt to the requirements of different countries.

"Supply chains are essentially the same the world over, and clients have very similar needs wherever they are based," Sega adds. "We add value by providing tried and tested localised software solutions that fit perfectly with the needs of each customer." ●



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