

Martens en Van Oord

Martens en Van Oord, a Dutch civil engineering and construction contractor, knew that knowledge sharing and information exchange are crucial to its business success. To capitalise on the expertise and knowledge of its employees, the company implemented an intuitive Micro Focus solution to capture and disseminate the information gleaned from past projects.



Overview

Located in the Dutch town of Oosterhout, Martens en Van Oord is a contracting company that operates in the civil engineering and construction industry. With around 240 employees, its portfolio includes a number of major infrastructure projects for both governmental organisations and private construction firms.

Challenge

Having successfully managed and delivered construction and civil engineering projects since 1986, Martens en Van Oord has built up an impressive body of industry expertise. This knowledge and experience have been fundamental to the company's success.

Although each project is different and necessarily requires its own solution, the commercial success of the company's operations relies on the

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ICT Manager
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collection and distillation of lessons learned from previous ventures and the dissemination of this information among employees. Knowledge sharing is vital to effective strategic planning and efficient project execution.

“The exchange of expertise and knowledge is absolutely critical to our business; it facilitates logistics and procurement optimisation and informs best practice,” said Wim van der Zouwen, ICT Manager, Martens en Van Oord. “For example, in terms of cost control, our project managers need to be aware of the significant cost savings that can be achieved through intelligent use of materials and resources.”

Solution

With a long track record of success in using Novell (now part of Micro Focus) technology, choosing an IT solution was an easy decision for Martens en Van Oord. “We were already using Novell Open Enterprise Server 2 as our strategic operating system, as well as Novell Open Workgroup Suite,” said van der Zouwen. “We were confident Novell could deliver the right solution for our company.”

Martens en Van Oord consulted with Micro Focus business partner, Netflex, which implemented an online forum solution based on Micro Focus® Vibe®. Called ‘The Sandpit’ (De Zandbak), it provides a powerful and intuitive



At a Glance

■ Industry

Construction

■ Location

Netherlands

■ Challenge

The company needed to effectively and strategically collaborate and share knowledge.

■ Solution

Use Micro Focus Vibe to discuss work-related subjects with an intuitive, user-friendly interface.

■ Results

- + Connected employees and enabled the sharing of business-critical information
- + Deepened employees' expertise and contributed to their professional development and commitment
- + Improved project execution through dissemination of lessons learned from past ventures

“Novell (now part of Micro Focus) Vibe enables us to incorporate lessons learned into current and future projects. It adds to the vital human capital of the business, enabling us to use information and knowledge as a strategic and operational asset”

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working space for employees to discuss work-related subjects, share project news and industry information, and access the 'corporate memory' of past project successes.

The forum consists of two parts: one that is open and accessible to all employees, dealing with topics including materials, personnel, accounting, quality, health, safety and environment; and another that is limited to a certain number of users and restricted to the exchange of business-critical information. With an intuitive, user-friendly interface, employees may easily post and respond to messages and find information with the powerful search engine functionality of Micro Focus Vibe.

An attractive advantage for Martens en Van Oord was the short implementation time of the solution. Netflix deployed and configured Micro Focus Vibe in just eight days. "Our own preparation in combination with the Netflix best practices-based implementation method and their technical knowledge worked very well," said van der Zouwen. "We were really impressed with the speed of delivery. It was simply astonishing!"

Martens en Van Oord also appreciated the low total cost of ownership offered by the solution. "We found that the cost of Novell Vibe compared favourably with competing products," said van der Zouwen. "Equally, we knew that it would integrate seamlessly with our existing landscape." The implementation ran smoothly, and after the first week of deployment more than half of the company's employees were active on the forum. Within a month that proportion had risen to almost 80 percent.

Results

Now that the company has access to a centralised knowledge database and information platform, the cost optimisation benefits of sharing vital business intelligence and industry expertise are being realised. Enthusiastic discussions centre on a diversity of project-related subjects. For instance, after Martens en Van Oord purchased a new crane, employees used Micro Focus Vibe to discuss its operation and how to use it with optimum economic efficiency.

"What we have gained is the use of information and knowledge as a strategic and operational asset," said van der Zouwen. "Novell (now part of Micro Focus) Vibe enables us to incorporate lessons learned into current and future projects. Not only does it add to the vital human capital of the whole business, but it also contributes to the professional development of our people."

The solution has enabled Martens en Van Oord to work in a more cost- and resource-efficient way and deliver a better quality of service to its customers. Furthermore, the company is beginning to expand the utility of the forum by adding new features.

"The potential of Novell Vibe is what really excites me," said van der Zouwen. "Soon there will be biweekly news updates in the online forum, weather reports especially useful to project managers and planners, integrated e-mail and calendar access, and links between project sites and Google Earth, for instance. There is an outstanding opportunity here to capitalise on the impressive functionality of the Novell technology to fully embed the sharing of expertise and knowledge into our company's way of working."



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