

VTTI secures quality and safety worldwide with one digital QHSE Platform: Icologiq Elements

VTTI, based in the port of Rotterdam, is specialized in storing and transporting oil. Therefore, the organisation has fourteen terminals all over the world - three of which are under construction - and it also runs several projects. With Icologiq Elements, VTTI guarantees that all terminals and projects work according to the same basic principles. Moreover, this quality software makes all underlying compliance processes transparent. "The best way to ensure that employees work safely is by giving them control over their own process."

VTTI has been using the software since 2010. Step by step, the organisation has automated all compliance-related activities with Icologiq Elements. "Our company was founded in 2006," IT-director René Gijsbers says. "During the first few years, we still worked with Excel and paper checklists. Due to our rapid growth, we quickly reached a size where something like this was no longer feasible. The "system" took up too much time and was prone to errors. In addition, we also realized that we could learn from each other if we applied transparency to everything related to safety and sustainability, for all locations. As the Dutch saying goes: a donkey does not hit the same stone twice, but because we have several locations, it was possible for us that the terminal in Malaysia would made the same mistake as our terminal in Latvia."

An even more important reason to invest in software and to automate all compliance-related activities, was the License to Operate within which each terminal must operate. "Due to the nature of our business, we have to comply with many regulations. Makes sense, because the storage and transport of oil naturally could form a risk to safety and the environment. Each country has different laws and regulations and these are also regularly updated. It is simply no longer possible to manually create all reports that governments require of us. In addition, we are regularly audited. That process doesn't go very smooth when the information has to come from different applications."

Freedom and Safety at the workplace

All the more reason to start looking for quality and safety management software in 2010. René and his team have put together a shortlist by looking at the software competitors were working with. Because Vopak used Icologiq's software - called Quality Online at the time - this supplier was shortlisted. "I immediately liked their vision: try not to automate every exception, but focus on the main process and automate this instead," René says. "This way, you enforce that everyone works according to the same procedures, without depriving employees of their freedom. Because safety is, of course, something you partly have to introduce top-down through fixed procedures, but you cannot enforce it in its entirety."

"The best way to ensure that employees work safely, is by giving them control over their own process. After all, they are on the work floor, they see what is happening and they want to be able to

intervene quickly when they see something that endangers safety. This should be possible without first having to go through all kinds of standard steps in a safety management system, and without rigid procedures prescribing exactly how to act. Because even if you record everything in a very detailed way, there will always be exceptions. Therefore, we were looking for software that ensures that employees always follow standard safety procedures, but also gives them the flexibility within these procedures to adapt their work to the circumstances. We have laid down the governance of the main process at an organisation-wide level and the terminals have local flexibility within this. This way, the head office can uniformly report quality and safety statistics on all terminals and a terminal can additionally report on specific matters that are relevant to them. ”

Forced compliance

VTTI uses Icologiq Elements for four compliance-oriented topics. All of the so-called Controlled Procedures - procedures the organisation is regularly audited on - are automated with Elements Document Control. Elements Incident Reporting is used to record all deviations from the ‘safe steady state’, as laid down in the controlled procedures. Deviations concern near misses, incidents, reports from Safety Observation Rounds, audits, safety reports et cetera. This extensive registration offers the possibility of good (corrective) action tracking, but at the same time also enables the organisation to keep statistics about deviations at terminals. With the Management of Change module, VTTI keeps track of all relevant (desired) changes that have an impact on process safety, together with changes that relate to the organisation, products, processes, procedures or equipment. With Elements Compliance Planning, VTTI ensures that the limits of the License to Operate are made transparent. On one hand, this concerns timely external reporting on all matters that authorities want information about, for example emission reports, and on the other hand, the internal sharing of information with regard to imposed inspection schedules or targets to be achieved for treatments of, for example, water, soil or air.

VTTI has set up the software in such a way, that the safety and sustainability processes of all terminals and projects are fully transparent for the head office in Rotterdam and all local management teams. “We don't punish mistakes, but we view them as a learning moment,” René explains. “By being open to each other about incidents and mistakes in the procedures, we can learn from each other and prevent someone else from making the same mistake.”

Learning from each other

VTTI learns from Icologiq as well. “I find the Lean Startup method from Icologiq very interesting,” René says. “They develop the software via Scrum. This means that they first marginally develop new functionality into a so-called minimal viable product (MVP), for which they immediately deliver a working system. After each scrum sprint - a two-week period of working on new functionality - the whole team comes together and they present each other the different parts they have worked on. They always keep a finger on the pulse of their customers: does the software as we have made it, work in practice? What could be improved and what should be changed? Due to the close interaction

between software developers and their customers, the company ensures that the software is well connected to practice at all times. ”

René and his colleague have spent a day at Icologiq in Enschede to experience how such a lean development process works in practice. "I am director of ITank, the ICT service provider of VTTI. In the working method of Icologiq, I am seeing parts that also fit very well in the way we develop software. We are also a pragmatic club that develops in close interaction with the business applications. Through our visit to Icologiq, we have experienced that we can structure our working methods even better and that we can present a working first version of an application to the business much earlier. Sometimes we wait too long before showing our internal customer what we have built. By showing progress through shorter iterations, you are even closer to their needs and you can avoid having to do a lot of rework. ”

When asked how he would summarize his relationship with Icologiq in one word, he says without hesitation: “Equivalent. They understand our business, we can talk at an equivalent level. We learn from them and they learn from us. It is not a customer-supplier relationship, but a real partnership.”

About VTTI

VTTI is a fast-growing and entrepreneurial organisation in storage and transshipment of oil products. VTTI owns eleven oil storage terminals worldwide on five different continents, with a combined capacity of more than 7.5 million m³. Three new terminals are under construction. VTTI is a 50/50 joint venture between the Vitol Group and MISC Berhad. For more information, check www.vtti.com.

This case study is offered to you by Icologiq BV, The Netherlands

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Call us at [+31 \(0\) 53 4809090 \(GMT+1\)](tel:+3120534809090)

Send an e-mail to info@icologiq.com

Register yourself at our website: www.icologiq.com