DIGIT ELEKTROTECHNIEK IMPLEMENTS 4PS CONSTRUCT

UNANIMOUS DECISION TO CHOOSE 4PS IN FINAL ROUND OF VOTING

Martijn Dekker – Owner (behind) and Controller Guido Helms (in front)

Based in Zwaag, a village slightly to the north of the old fortified town of Hoorn, the family business DIGIT Elektrotechniek has been serving its clients for nearly thirty years. Its clients are mainly industrial businesses, most of which are based in the province of North Holland. DIGIT Elektrotechniek mentions on its website, not without pride, that they have 'virtually all industrial businesses in North Holland in the client base. From PWN to Gasunie and from Campina to Tata Steel'. And they are equally proud about the rating which they have been awarded by Graydon, the credit information provider, that the company is classified among the 'top 5% of the healthiest businesses in the sector from a financial perspective'. DIGIT Elektrotechniek provides services in the fields of (databased) engineering, control panel assembly, installation and inspections. In addition to this, it develops and implements industrial software (PLC, HMI and SCADA). The company also has its own 24/7 breakdown service.

Because its old ERP package was no longer supported, DIGIT Elektrotechniek switched to Microsoft Dynamics NAV 4PS Construct in the summer of 2013, after a thorough and careful selection procedure. We asked owner director Martijn Dekker and controller Guido Helms why they ultimately chose to do business with 4PS and why they 'feel good about the implementation of 4PS Construct in retrospect'.

resources, without external financing. This inspires our clients to have confidence in us. Partly because of this, it means that they are assured of the continuity of our service.

We also believe that our corporate philosophy plays an important role. We aim primarily for quality, competing in terms of price comes after quality. Which is why we never compete in tender processes, because price is virtually always the deciding factor. We want to reinforce the ties with our clients by the way we provide service, which can safely be described as empathetic. We strive to take the wishes and requirements of our clients fully into account, and that is the basis for our solutions. That's when you're confronted with questions like: how can we improve the continuity of your production process? How can we make your production more efficient, economical, more transparent and safer? And how can we help you to implement a new product line in the best way possible? We offer our services based on these client-specific questions. And it works; that much is clear to us.'

When and why did you start looking for a new ERP solution?

Guido Helms: 'We'd been wanting to buy something new for a while. Our old system dated from 1989. Over time, we built up a whole system based on the old package. We knew that sooner or later we'd have to do things differently, but as long as it worked, we made do. Here in the company we have always been of the opinion that we need to rely on the high standard of our service and not so much on our IT. That was until the supplier told us that they would no longer be supporting the package: it was too old.

OK, we said, we're going to find another solution, but then we're going to make sure we get it right the first time. So we put together six working groups which represent all the disciplines and departments. From these, we created one project group consisting of five people, each of whom bore individual responsibility for several

WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT OUR CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE

Martijn Dekker – Owner

business processes. Martijn and I were part of the group and were also the ones ultimately responsible for the entire selection and implementation procedure.

The working groups and project group had to thoroughly and comprehensively investigate which package would best suit us and support our procedures. The selection process kicked off in mid-February 2013.'

What made you choose 4PS and 4PS Construct at the end of the day?

Guido Helms: 'UNETO VNI, the employers' organisation for our sector, has a list of ERP suppliers. Using that list, and also based on exploratory visits to various suppliers, we drew up a shortlist of four names. 4PS, as well as our old supplier, were on that list.'
Martijn Dekker: 'Our first introduction to 4PS was back in 2004. Not long before that, I had joined the family business, together with my girlfriend. As the newcomer to the business, I soon saw that the ERP system was out of date and so I took it upon myself to do something about it. That was when I first got in touch with 4PS. But it wasn't as simple as that, of course. Gradually I realised that we would first have to get our procedures completely up to scratch. We didn't make a deal with 4PS at that point, but we did stay in touch. Incidentally, we did sincerely try not to take it into account in the selection procedure. We wanted to be business-like and open in our approach to all four candidates.'

Guido helms – Controller

The DIGIT Elektrotechniek Office

Guido Helms: 'Two of the candidates were dropped quite early on. Their communications were up the creek and they arrived late for their appointments. Which raised the questions: if it's already hard work dealing with these people, what's it going to be like when you have to tackle a difficult project together? The remaining two, so including 4PS, were pretty well matched in terms of content and process support. And

Even though there are signs of slight financial growth, the market seems to be improving only slowly. How does a company like DIGIT Elektrotechniek keep going in financially slow times?

Martijn Dekker: 'To be honest, it seems as though 2014 may be our best year ever! It is all to do with the well-considered choice of clients that my father once made. When he set up his own business in 1988 – together with my mother – he decided to focus exclusively on industrial organisations. We still don't work in residential construction, and we only do office installations if our clients ask us specifically. Our clients operate mainly in the food and 'public utilities' industries, sectors which by their nature are less vulnerable than the construction

WE DO EVERYTHING FROM OUR OWN RESOURCES, WITHOUT EXTERNAL FINANCING

sector, for instance. That choice now works to our advantage even more.
What's more, we're a financially healthy company. We do everything from our own

that's when other matters play a role.'
Martijn Dekker: 'Indeed. Which is why we visited a company that worked with 4PS Construct as well as a company which operated using the other candidate's solution. It was at the latter company that we made an alarming discovery. What was the story? The other prospective supplier had someone working full time on customising the implementation of quite a few functionalities. That really put us off.'
Guido Helms: '4PS Construct, on the other hand, had a much broader base, while at the same time it gives you the flexibility to set up the functionality yourself, using role-based functionality.'

What exactly was the deciding factor?

Martijn Dekker: 'Primarily, it was the fact that 4PS Construct is a standard solution with an incredibly wide range of options. That was precisely what we wanted: on the one hand, to be dependent on the supplier as little as possible and, on the other hand, having to make no

concessions in terms of flexibility.'
Guido Helms: 'Another important factor was the role that Microsoft has in the overall picture. As far as we were concerned,

ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR WAS THE ROLE THAT MICROSOFT HAS IN THE OVERALL PICTURE

this meant that the continuity of the 4PS solution would be guaranteed as much as possible. What's more, the

integration with the full Office package was of course ideal.'
Martijn Dekker: 'Guido and I therefore clearly preferred 4PS. But we didn't want to force it on anyone, despite the fact that we share ultimate responsibility. The other three project group members represented all the operational procedures; their vote in the whole process was crucial. So we were even more delighted when it turned out during the final round of voting that 4PS Construct was the unanimous choice. This meant that we had avoided comments along the lines of: thanks to you lot we're now saddled with this package!'

How did the implementation go?

Guido Helms: 'Our previous package was so obsolete that our people had created all kinds of additional functions, mainly in Excel. Those additions weren't all equally successful. We took the opportunity during the implementation, which started in the summer of 2013, to integrate all the various processes into one uniform struc-

Measurements in a switch case

ture, so that everyone now works in the same way. This has led to a shift in responsibilities, though. For instance, from now on project managers are not only responsible for the technical side of things, but also for the financial administrative aspects. Some people had to get used to that.'
Martijn Dekker: 'We opted to implement 4PS Construct on the NAV 2013 base that was available at the time. This was a first for 4PS too, so quite exciting in fact. But we had every confidence in 4PS. Which was justified, as it happens, because we never had any real problems, only a few minor ones. Looking back, we feel really good about how things went!'
Guido Helms: 'We went live on 1 January this year. We started configuring our most important procedures, so that the continuity of our operational practices was safeguarded.'
Martijn Dekker: 'You could say that at the moment we are busy optimising our basic functionalities. Only once we are completely satisfied with that will we proceed to the next implementation phase. We are taking things one step at a time. First things first is our motto!'

What exactly are your requirements for further optimisation?

Guido Helms: 'We are thinking mainly about a customer portal which we can use

to respond to questions from our clients about, for instance, the progress of projects, the status of service and maintenance, but also the processing of complaints. One of our biggest clients is PWN, which is a water supply company in North Holland. They have to deal with lots of small service calls which they are currently handling as separate orders. It's a hassle. It would be ideal for both of us if we could register jobs via a portal, complete with the accompanying financial administrative process. We also want to put our planning in 4PS Construct. The only problem is that the deployment of our mechanics is slightly different to the way things are normally organised. Our people are sometimes at the same site for weeks on end, while service mechanics may do rounds at several locations each day. Together with 4PS, we're going to see how we can organise this work effectively in 4PS Construct.'

You have been working with 4PS Construct for nine months now. Does the 4PS ERP solution meet your expectations?

Guido Helms: 'We see ourselves as a proactive party. We try to keep abreast of what is going on at our clients and of the developments that are relevant to them, so that we can respond in good time. We want to anticipate their questions, as it were. And

the 4PS solution suits this perfectly. The package is continuously being renewed, and adapts constantly to market demand.'
Martijn Dekker: 'That, I think, is what we are especially enthusiastic about: the continuous innovation contained in the package. It continues to come up with new possibilities to improve your own procedures. And it is really great to have a sparring partner in 4PS. So we can look forward to working together for a while to come!'

COMPANY PROFILE

DIGIT Elektrotechniek, located in Zwaag, a small place in the north of the Netherlands, is a specialist in electrical engineering and automation for the optimization of industrial production. DIGIT develops, builds, installs and maintains systems that ensure the continuity of production and increase the reliability and safety. DIGIT guarantees a 99.99% up-time of all its developed installations.

BRIEF FACTS

COMPANY
DIGIT Elektrotechniek
www.digitelektrotechniek.nl
ACTIVITIES:
DIGIT Elektrotechniek is specialized in the installation and maintenance of electrical engineering and automation for industrial processes.
MODULES:
Project Management, Finance, Service & Maintenance, Customer Relationship Management, Purchasing, Sales, Document Management, Planning
NUMBER OF CONCURRENT USERS
20

Maintenance provided by DIGIT Elektrotechniek