opentext™

Success story

Vitens

Industry
• Energy and Utilities

Solution
• OpenText™ Document Management

Results

📄 Proactive **contract management**

🔍 **User-friendly retrieval** of documents

📑 **Version management**

⇄ **Information sharing**

🗄 Reduced **storage costs**

🧩 **Integrations** with critical corporate systems

📄 **Quick and efficient** document management system

OpenText Document Management— one of the core systems at Vitens

Users assured of document version and storage locations, two key challenges with former management systems

"For the Vitens core systems, we apply strict company policies: OpenText Document Management is the preferred ECM system."

Chrisjan Van Niekerk
Project Manager
Vitens ICT

Vitens is the youngest and largest water company in the Netherlands. Contrary to common practice in the utility sector, Vitens is a public company; this means the company shares indirectly belong to the provinces and municipalities. The water market is not free, and therefore the customer is not free to choose. According to Vitens, this brings added responsibility to deliver good quality water at a reasonable price.

To comply with this responsibility, the ability to manage unstructured information via Enterprise Content Management (ECM) will play an increasingly important role at Vitens in the coming years. The first major step is the successful roll out of OpenText™ Document Management, which is now one of Vitens core systems. Each year, Vitens extracts, purifies and distributes 330 million m3 of water for 5.4 million customers in the provinces of Flevoland, Friesland, Gelderland, Utrecht, Overijssel and a number of municipalities in Drenthe and Noord-Holland.

Needs and demands

Before getting started with the implementation of OpenText's Enterprise Content Management, Vitens identified the most important bottlenecks and focus points. The most common complaints among the Vitens employees were "How do I know for sure this is the correct version of a document?" and "Where exactly are the documents stored?", so Vitens management adopted the following ECM vision: Documents should only be stored once and must be available to all authorized employees. Version management guarantees only the most recent and approved version of a document is available. Metadata and full-text indexing will be used to search and retrieve documents. Key is increasing ease-of-use integration with Vitens corporate templates. Furthermore, records management is essential to manage and secure the authenticity and retention period of documents.

Vitens metadata model

"Vitens sees a crucial role within their ECM strategy for metadata— data describing the characteristics of documents, such as author, date of writing, subject and keywords," said Chrisjan van Niekerk. *"By using metadata, all relevant documents can be found within their context, eliminating as many 'false hits' as possible. Besides, the use of metadata taxonomy is very suitable to structure digital files and supports document archiving and document management. In order to stimulate consistent use of metadata, Vitens developed an organization-wide metadata model."*

OpenText Document Management for Vitens

The OpenText ECM Suite is now one of Vitens core systems; the system they rely on for document management. More than 700 different applications are running within Vitens and for all the key processes like production, sales, distribution, general (communication, HR, purchasing and logistics), the organization has defined core systems. *"For the Vitens core systems we apply strict company policies: OpenText Document Management is the preferred ECM system,"* said van Niekerk. *"The major advantage of this policy is that the core applications have the support of management, which creates a large support base within the organization."*

Vitens has quite deliberately chosen a phased approach. According to van Niekerk, this approach works well because it provides the direct support of the employees. *"Instead of making it an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) project, it is important to involve the business departments and make them responsible as it concerns their problem. This*

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approach will give you the best chance of success. Standard for the Vitens project approach is the creation of a business case (costs versus revenues) to determine the urgency and economic feasibility. Once the business case has been approved by the IT Governance Board of Vitens, the project can start," said van Niekerk.
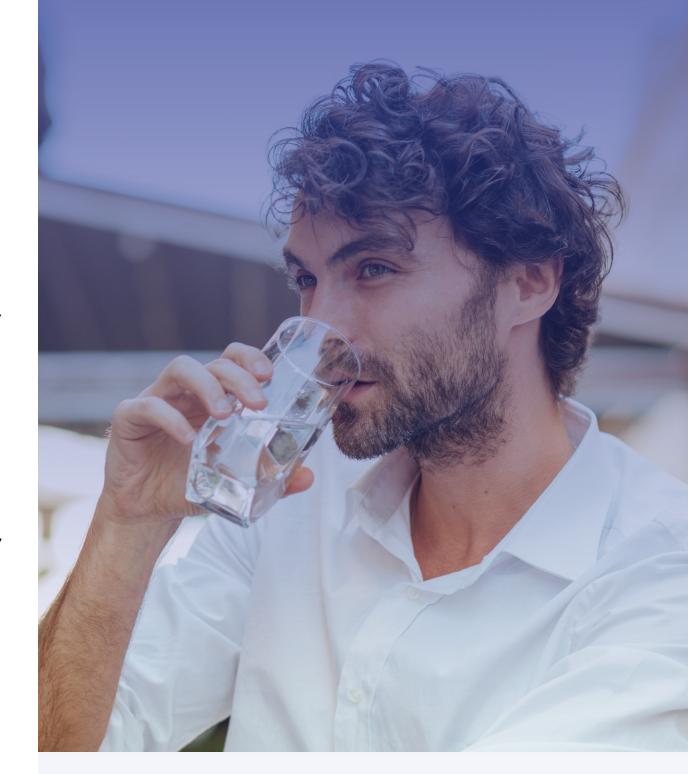
Major benefits

Vitens uses several packages from the OpenText ECM Suite, including OpenText Content Lifecycle Management and Contract Management. *"The Virtual Folders module is one of the powerful tools giving us the opportunity to make cross-sections through the content repository by using metadata,"* said van Niekerk. *"This makes the organization very flexible in sharing information with other departments. We were able to realize cost savings on SAP data storage on our externally hosted network by implementing OpenText™ Archiving for SAP® Solutions. These storage costs had increased enormously over the past few years because of the explosive growth of our SAP database. Additionally, the OpenText ECM Suite provides out-of-the-box interfaces with other key corporate systems within Vitens, including Microsoft SharePoint®, SAP®, AutoCAD®and Kofax scanning software."*

To date, the first sub-project has been successfully rolled out at the Documentary Information Facilities (DIV) department within Vitens. Van Niekerk said, *"The digitization project of incoming and outgoing mail has been completed in time, as planned."* He explains that when the physical mail arrives at the central mailroom in Lelystad, it is scanned and made accessible through a workflow by adding metadata. *"From this moment, mail can be opened by authorized users, who receive an alert through Outlook regardless of their workplace location. Training of the 1,500 full-time employees within Vitens takes place through eLearning. The eLearning tool is sent as a link and employees can decide whether they will use it or not."*

In the second half of 2009, another project with an excellent business case will be launched: purchasing contracts management. *"This project will focus on the proactive management of 400 purchasing contracts, with an annual contract value of 150 million euros,"* said van Niekerk. *"It is not an isolated process; it is connected to the incoming mail process and eProcurement. We expect to achieve some important process improvements, like consistent creation of supplier files for annual reviews. Timely reminders on contract endings and management reports about the deployment of staff will also be very valuable, especially in the case of complex European contracts. Last but not least, we expect to realize about 0.5 percent savings as a result of proactive contract management, which means a one-year return on the investment (ROI)."*

Future projects

Other projects planned for 2009 are digitizing the reports of the supplies department, unlocking documents on quality, labor health issues and environment (called 'KAM' documents) and digitizing employee files. *"Another major sub-project is handling the increasing amount of customer emails with OpenText Document Management,"* said van Niekerk. *"The challenges for 2010 are managing AutoCAD drawings and licenses within OpenText Document Management. As a result of the mergers, these licenses are very diverse and are stored across the entire organization. Furthermore, next year the Vitens-wide deployment of OpenText Document Management will be completed, which includes replacement of the network server and complete integration of ECM within the Vitens IT architecture."*

About OpenText

OpenText, The Information Company, enables organizations to gain insight through market leading information management solutions, on-premises or in the cloud. For more information about OpenText (NASDAQ: OTEX, TSX: OTEX) visit opentext.com.

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