

LOQUTUS AND MÖBIUS SUPPORT VYGON TO IMPROVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS AND CREATE A MORE COHESIVE, UNIFIED ORGANISATION

“Being a group of independent entities has always been a strength for Vygon, but it was time to promote more internal alignment & integration. Each affiliate was devising its own solutions, which is not always the best use of resources. The solution proposed by LoQutus, whilst still in its trial stage, is promising to deliver a tool that will bring integration and cohesion to our organisation without losing the benefits of individuality.” - *Jean-Claude Couturier, Forecast & Corporate Flow Manager at Vygon*

Digital communications platform to further enhance integration, co-operation and more effective supply chain management

Vygon is a leading global player in the field of single-use medical and surgical equipment, with a strong emphasis on product innovation, development and reliability. Made up of 26 independent affiliates across the globe, the company is seeking to improve communication and cohesion between the affiliates and promote a stronger sense of belonging to a single group among employees. LoQutus collaborated with its parent company Möbius, a specialist in supply chain management, to create a bespoke digital platform for Vygon that would support them in this venture.

Vygon is a privately owned company and has been developing, manufacturing and distributing single-use medical products, such as catheters and needles, since 1962. The company is headquartered in France but has a worldwide presence in over 110 countries through a network of distributors and 26 affiliates, as well as ten manufacturing plants.

Vygon is dedicated to developing high-quality products for key medical speciality fields, including pediatrics/neonatology, oncology, emergency and intensive care and surgery.

Creating innovative, high-quality products that meet customer needs at a competitive price is Vygon’s key strategic goal, aiming to enable medical professionals to offer patients the best possible care under the safest possible conditions.

Creating a sense of community

Vygon’s corporate structure is traditionally based on its network of highly independent, autonomous affiliates located all over the world. The proven key benefits of this model include geographical proximity to customers, knowledge of local culture and market dynamics and an ability to react quickly to customer and market requirements.

However, the company has also recognised that there are downsides to this approach, as Jean-Claude Couturier, Forecast & Corporate Flow Manager at Vygon, explains:

“Whilst the autonomy of each affiliate has always been a very positive influence on customer relationships, we have come to realise that a closer-knit community and more integration between the affiliates could bring additional benefits. Flow of information and stock management can be difficult, since there is no single ERP system in place – only some production sites and the larger commercial affiliates are currently connected to an ERP.”

“In addition, the independent, autonomous approach means that many affiliates are focused exclusively on their own patch and are reluctant to embrace change; they do not see themselves as being part of a larger entity”, Couturier continues. “It has become clear that by improving the flow of information internally and centralising our supply chain management, we could maximise internal knowledge and competencies as well as harness stock availability across different locations.”

Collaboration, integration and communication

Supply chain management specialist Möbius has been working with Vygon for several years on planning and stock management projects. During an informal discussion, the issue of the need to bring the disparate parts of the company closer together came up and was subsequently discussed further. Möbius brought in its subsidiary LoQutus in order to develop a collaborative digital platform that would enable them to address some of the issues Vygon was facing.

Nicolas Jassogne, Management Consultant at Möbius, says: “Thanks to our close relationship with Vygon, we were able to advise them on the best way of centralising their communications and some of their processes, without compromising the positive effects of the de-centralised setup. They needed a communications platform to achieve this, and our subsidiary LoQutus was in a position to develop one that is tailored to their specific needs. “

Jens Bontinck, Consultant at LoQutus, adds: “As a first step, we used a commercially available product – SharePoint by Microsoft – and adapted it to suit Vygon’s requirements. This product is very suited to their needs thanks to the user-friendly interface and cloud infrastructure, making it easily accessible from anywhere in the world. In addition, it will help address some of the more practical problems, such as being able to manage stock more effectively and centralise standardised forms, information material, best practices and training guidelines as well as provide a platform for more informal exchanges between employees. The key goal was to achieve consistent information and make it available to everyone.”

Testing and promoting the new platform

A pilot project was set up with the affiliates in Sweden and Germany to test the new platform. Initial feedback from users was positive, and the project will now enter a second test phase during which any issues identified in the first run will be eliminated. Currently, the roll-out across all affiliates is scheduled for the first quarter of 2017. The platform will primarily be used for central planning and sales, as well as local purchasing. It will become the key supply chain tool from purchasing right through to sales and will enable surplus of stock in one country to be effectively routed to other

countries where a shortage may exist. There are, however, a few challenges and hurdles to overcome before the project can be rolled out globally.

“Since we are currently also in the process of implementing a new corporate structure based on business units as well as a new APS (Advanced Planning System) developed in-house, it is challenging to find the time and resources to push the roll-out forward”, explains Couturier. “This tool can turn out to be a great solution for us, but one of the key challenges going forward will be to encourage staff to use it on a regular basis; we need to position it clearly as an opportunity for improvements and not yet another tool they must use. Together with Möbius and LoQutus, we are working to further develop this aspect of the project. We are preparing training materials and methods, including games and interactive communication, to help promote the sense of community among staff.”

Further challenges to be dealt with include identifying the technical limitations of the platform, managing user rights and populating the tool with relevant and informative content. Bontinck concludes: “LoQutus will continue to support and assist Vygon in addressing these issues and adapt and mould the tool as it evolves over time, ensuring that it addresses all of the users’ needs and they get the most out of it.”