LOQUTUS DEVELOPS CUSTOMISED SOLUTION FOR RECUPEL DECLARATIONS

EMPLOYEES, MEMBERS AND INTERNAL IT DEPARTMENT RAVING ABOUT CENTRALISED APPLICATION

Follow-up on member files and periodic declarations at the Recupel's Declaration Department was handled via a loose web of applications and manual steps, making the task difficult. The request to strategic partner LoQutus was to develop a new customised application that centralises all information and processes. At the same time, all historical data needs to be correctly migrated to a new database model.

Recupel is largely funded by a contribution that has been incorporated in the selling price of each new electrical and electronic appliance in Belgium. With this income, the non-profit organisation coordinates and organises the collection, sorting, processing and recycling of discarded electrical appliances and lamps. Recupel also takes responsibility for the communication about and administration of its efforts.

As part of the process, importers and producers report the quantity of electrical appliances they bring into the Belgian market to Recupel's Declaration Department. However, the processing of this incoming data stream was not always efficient. According to Jan Sabbe, IT manager at Recupel, there were two reasons for this: "On the one hand, the Department worked with outdated technology. Browsers were no longer supported, the interfaces looked anything but contemporary and were not user friendly... On the other hand, data was spread across different systems. For example, execution of a single business process could require the use of several different applications. With all of the siloes of information and associated confusion, an internal employee who followed up on a project could no longer see the forest for the trees."

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Recupel entrusted LoQutus, a strategic partner of the non-profit organisation for several years, with the project to improve operations. "We asked them to develop a new system to enable end users to gain easy and convenient access to all data," Sabbe says. "In doing so, it was important to retain the business processes that were working well and had demonstrated their usefulness."

Three years ago, LoQutus developed a logistics application for Recupel. "With that in mind, we started with an analysis of the organisation's business processes. The approach for this project was different from our previous collaborations with Recupel," says Piet-Michiel Rappelet, Project Manager. "The business department desired to be heavily involved, while we normally work closely together with the IT department. The objectives of Recupel were clear: the declaration application had to be built based on the most recent Microsoft technology. In addition, we had to optimise and merge the existing applications into a single portal where both employees and members could follow up on a file and easily determine status. Finally, they also wanted to keep all the historical data."

Sabbe added, "From within IT, we directed LoQutus to develop a customised solution rather than aggregating existing packages. The solution also needed to interface with some of our systems. And importantly, this project required the migration of all data to a new database. LoQutus stepped up to the plate and succeeded wonderfully."

"THE LOQUTUS TEAM DEMONSTRATED ITS ADDED VALUE AS COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL DEVELOPERS. THEY DID A BEAUTIFUL JOB OF BRINGING TOGETHER RELEVANT INFORMATION TO BE PRESENTED TO EACH USER BASED ON THEIR INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS. AFTER ONLY A FEW WORKSHOPS, THEY GAINED AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE COMPLETE BUSINESS CONTEXT IN WHICH THIS NEW APPLICATION NEEDED TO OPERATE."

Jan Sabbe
IT-manager
Recupel

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Within Recupel's Declaration Department, work was accomplished using a loose web of applications, which greatly hampered file management.

SOLUTION

LoQutus optimised the existing applications and developed a customised solution, enabling all parties involved to more efficiently follow up on files via the same central platform. All data was successfully migrated to a new database.

AGILE PROJECT METHODOLOGY

Within the new application, a member can now simply enter the number of units he puts into the market using an online portal. Employees of Recupel then follow up on files via a dashboard that presents the information within the same interfaces and which follows a logical flow. "In this project, LoQutus really demonstrated its added value as compared to traditional developers," Sabbe states. "They did a beautiful job of bringing together relevant information to be presented to each user based on their individual requirements. After only a few workshops, they gained an understanding of the complete business context in which this new application needed to operate."

To achieve this, LoQutus opted for an "agile" and iterative project approach, with the end users at the wheel. "The project started with an insights phase, during which we received an overview of the current processes, systems and data. We developed almost immediately a test application and started with the data migration," explains Piet-Michiel Rappelet. "In short phases of three weeks, we were able to formulate requirements and to refine and alter the test application, without losing sight of the agreed-upon budget and staying within the high level scope of the project."

To further optimise the user experience, LoQutus worked with a third party who supported the team in setting up the interfaces and mapping the navigation.

A UNIQUE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND USER PROFILES

Sabbe remarks, "The project was completed within the predetermined budget and the agreed deadline. We went live on 1 October 2016, after running both systems in parallel for one month using the same data. From an IT perspective, we were thrilled: no major issues arose and we did not need to provide support to business employees since the solution was so intuitive."

The feedback from end users has been unanimously positive. "Communication with the members is a lot smoother than before," says Ewout Duyck, the primary user of the application.

The success of this project is not the end of the story. In May of this year, a follow-up project was been set up to add control processes to the new application. LoQutus and Recupel are working together in the same way as the previous project.

"ON THE ONE HAND, THE STRENGTH OF THIS PROJECT WAS IN THE EXCELLENT COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TEAMS OF RECUPEL AND LOQUTUS, BUILT ON MUTUAL TRUST. ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WAS AN EFFICIENT AND THOUGHTFUL CONTROL OF THE MANAGEMENT BASED ON SUPPORTED OBJECTIVES AND RELATED LEVERS. THESE ASPECTS PROVIDED THE NECESSARY FLEXIBILITY DURING THE PROJECT WITH A CLEAR LONG-TERM VISION."

Piet-Michiel Rappelet
Project Manager
LoQutus

Kortrijksesteenweg 1146
B-9051 Sint-Denijs-Westrem
www.loqutus.com