



Dichtomatik Increases Efficiency and Productivity with Electronic Document Archiving

Based in Zwolle (The Netherlands), Dichtomatik specialises in manufacturing technical seals. From o-rings to bonded seals, the technical wholesaler delivers tailor-made products in every conceivable dimension. Dichtomatik has well over 100,000 seal variations in stock. Every Dichtomatik team member conscientiously works towards living up to the claim as shown in the pay-off line of the company logo, 'Any Seal, Any Time'.

Dichtomatik is part of the publicly traded Freudenberg Group. There are currently eight subsidiaries in Europe: in England, Sweden, the Netherlands, France, Austria, Hungary, Italy and the headquarters in Germany as well as five sites in Canada, USA, Mexico and Brazil.

There are but a few steps between order and delivery, according to Gerrit Knopert, Commercial Manager of Dichtomatik. 'I've been with the company since 1990 although I did a short stint as Sales Manager The Netherlands of the ERP suite Vacos that is used for procurement, inventory management and sales at Dichtomatik.

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Gerrit Knopert
Commercial Manager, Dichtomatik



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Paperless Office

Overview

Country: The Netherlands
Industry: Technical Wholesaler

Company

Dichtomatik specialises in manufacturing technical seals. Its main task is to supply customers with the right seal in the right dimension as quickly as possible. Its comprehensive range – there are currently over 55,000 different types of seals in stock – is continuously being extended.

Challenge

The electronic archiving of all documents related to the order, procurement and sales of technical seals; fast access to information and building workflows, such as archiving faxes and the error-free digitisation of invoices, packing lists and order confirmations.

Solution

Implementation of *ELOprofessional*.

Benefits

ELOprofessional provides staff with an infinite electronic archive, allowing them to quickly retrieve any documents not older than five years with one mouse click. The workflows have resulted in fast and transparent business processes (e.g. approval of invoices) as well as improved customer service.

In this job I got to know **ELO** Digital Office since they have a business partnership with Vacos. What's more, I had already seen a few product demos by **ELO** staff.'

So, in 2009 Dichtomatik opted for electronic archiving with **ELOprofessional**. It was a logical decision since the integration with the ERP system had already been largely completed. 'While it's true the **ELO** software is certainly not the cheapest solution available, we agreed it was the best choice given all the possibilities it gives us,' says Knopert. 'From the very start we wanted to create a paperless office, get rid of binders and filing cabinets, and automate our workflow. In practice, this means a document is scanned in the warehouse, the paper version disappears in the shredder, a workflow is subsequently initiated in **ELOprofessional** that determines how the electronic document needs to be routed along for further action by the various departments, and eventually an invoice is printed.'

Challenges

Building the electronic document management system was not without its challenges. Knopert: 'We had to automate a few workflows and integrate them into **ELOprofessional**. Think of archiving faxes and the error-free digitisation of invoices, packing lists and order confirmations. When we create an invoice in our ERP system, which has limited functionality for archiving and preserving documents during three years, the problem is these documents officially are not valid and legally sound because they can be changed. With **ELOprofessional**, though, this is impossible, since the system provides our staff with an infinite electronic archive, allowing them to quickly retrieve any documents not older than five years with one mouse click.'



Building the workflow process was a time-consuming project. Knopert: 'We use optical character recognition (OCR) technology for every incoming document and integrating this information into the workflow process required some fine-tuning and testing. The result is that **ELOprofessional** now recognises faultlessly any type of seal and identifies whether it's a new order or a product return.'

Going Paperless

Today Knopert can hardly imagine what it was like to work without a system like **ELOprofessional**: 'It's become quite an indispensable part of our business processes. Our ERP system allocates document numbers to packing lists of suppliers and invoices, and when I enter a specific number **ELOprofessional** will instantly retrieve the related document on my screen. In the old days we had to walk to the archive or a filing cabinet painstakingly thumbing through paper files – a time-consuming chore. Likewise with invoices. Staff no longer need to come and see me for having them signed off. With **ELOprofessional**, I can do so on my PC at any time and anywhere, even when I'm not at the office.'

What impact has the document management system had on the Dichtomatik staff in Zwolle? Knopert: 'Our employees appeared to be more used to paper than we'd initially thought, so working with **ELOprofessional** meant a step-change for them. To help ease the transition to going paperless, we bought extra computer screens for those working intensively with the document management system, so that they can work with, for example, Microsoft Outlook, on one screen, and see the complete document on the other just as they did previously with A4-size paper. After two years they've become completely used to working digitally and can only see the benefits in terms of instant access to and fast retrieval of information, infinite storage capacity and improved customer service.'

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Gerrit Knopert
Commercial Manager, Dichtomatik



Reference

„Over the past three years the number of purchase order lines has increased by 35 per cent. Since 2000 we have worked with 15 to 16 staff; yet, our turnover has increased by more than 50 per cent. These facts and figures suggest that the investment of ELOprofessional has helped create a win-win situation for us.“

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System Roll-out

Dichtomatik has quickly recouped the total investment – around EUR 20,000. ‘When we bought the system,’ Knopert explains, ‘we were in the midst of the financial crisis, but at the same time we realised it was the right moment to implement an electronic document management system. Over the past three years the number of purchase order lines has increased by 35 per cent. Since 2000 we have worked with 15 to 16 staff; yet, our turnover has increased by more than 50 per cent. These facts and figures suggest that the investment of **ELOprofessional** has helped create a win-win situation for us.’

Asked about the roll-out to other subsidiaries, Knopert says: ‘Within the Dichtomatik Group, we’re certainly a pioneer in electronic document archiving, and I therefore expect this will lead to other subsidiaries following suit, all the more so as they use the same ERP system and the integration with **ELO** is already in place. But really, time will tell. From our part, we intend to become really conversant with all aspects of **ELOprofessional** before we’re going to look at other opportunities such as working via the Web.’