USER
ADOPTION

Realdolmen gives guidance to Waterwegen en Zeekanaal^{NV} for the launch of its new mail registration system

Waterwegen en Zeekanaal NV (W&Z) is gradually digitalizing its processes. Realdolmen guided the change process for the implementation of a new mail registration system based on its User Adoption methodology: from the preparations to training and follow-up during and after the go-live.

W&Z manages the waterways of the west and center of the Flanders region in Belgium. The external, autonomous agency is responsible for the sustainable, dynamic management of the navigable waterways and a large part of the land surrounding the waterways in its operating area. The organization reports to the Department of Mobility and Public Works of the Flemish Government. W&Z's operating area includes the rivers Scheldt, Lys, Yser, Dender and Nete, the Ghent-Bruges and Leuven-Dyle channels and the Brussels-Scheldt Maritime Canal. W&Z's registered office is located in Willebroek. The organization also has several other locations across its operating area. W&Z has about 875 employees.

W&Z uses a mail registration system based on Microsoft SharePoint to ensure its mail is distributed efficiently to the staff. The employees receive an email notification when new mail becomes available. They can then view the scanned mail documents on the central platform. They enter outgoing letters in the system, which triggers a workflow to digitally sign and then send the letters. The new mail registration system is the result of a government contract. Realdolmen was assigned the tasks of analyzing the technical solution, handling the project management and guiding and training the users.

OBJECTIVE VIEW

In the first stage of the project, Realdolmen put together a W&Z team of about twenty employees. These 'champions' acted as representatives of the various departments in the organization. "It was our job to give input," W&Z Senior Management Assistant Michèle Croes says. "We had to indicate what functionality we were expecting from the new system." In practice, there were quite a few different opinions in this regard. The departments and the teams often had very different needs. At times like that, it was Realdolmen's task to act as an objective referee in order to reach sound common ground and at the same time make sure that everything remained technically feasible.

Each time the next part of the technical development was completed, Realdolmen managed the testing process. "Our team of champions offered comments and suggestions," Michèle Croes adds, "which Realdolmen then incorporated in their feedback to the programmers. That is an important role, which is often undervalued during the follow-up of a software project." The fact that both parties were involved in the software programming and testing offered an extra form of quality control. "That way you keep an objective view of the project and, as the customer, you get the best final result."

COMMUNICATION ABOUT CHANGE

Realdolmen was also responsible for the communication plan, which is essential in a software process. "During such a major project, it is very important that staff remain up to date on what is happening and what is going to change," Michèle Croes says. "At the same time, it is also vital to listen
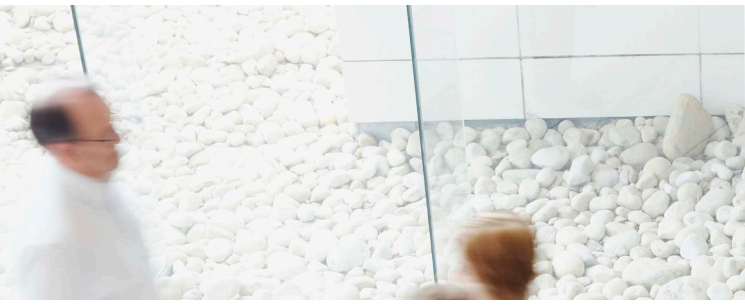
to employees' input and then take action based on that input." Realdolmen put together the information on the project and kept the champions up to date. Realdolmen also developed a manual on how to use the mail registration system. Michèle Croes: "The manual not only describes how the software works. It also shows the structure of the process. The manual gives all our employees the necessary information. It shows the practical steps they need to take to pick up or send mail, for example."

If the staff at W&Z have any questions about the mail registration system, they can get in touch with their contact in the team of champions. This is why Realdolmen set up an extensive training program for the champions themselves. Realdolmen built an e-learning module based on Articulate, for example. Michèle Croes: "Then we worked with Realdolmen to organize the staff training sessions. Realdolmen provided us with additional presentations and training slides." More than thirty training sessions were held at W&Z. They gave every employee the opportunity and the necessary guidance to familiarize themselves with the new mail registration system and the associated processes.

EVERYONE INVOLVED

After the new system's actual go-live, Realdolmen and the champions remained available to provide some additional support to staff as needed. Michèle Croes: "Good support is a must. We are aware that this is a major change. There is much more involved than simply rolling out a new application. The ultimate aim is to change the way we work, and that naturally takes time." The champions' support showed their colleagues that they were not alone and they could always rely on a helping hand in their own department. Realdolmen's involvement actually ensured that the organization kept a good overview of what was going on. "The employees are spread across various sites. It is a lot harder for them to gain such an overview. Realdolmen helped us to involve everyone and to guide people towards a new approach. That is Realdolmen's true added value."

The implementation of the mail registration system is just one element of a much broader digitalization program at W&Z. "Paper and digital documents used to co-exist," Michèle Croes concludes. "The new mail system has digitalized all incoming and outgoing correspondence. Searching through mail items in folders in a cabinet somewhere is now a thing of the past. We can view the items digitally from all locations on the central platform."

"Realdolmen's guidance and professional approach greatly increased people's involvement and resulted in an exceptionally positive experience during the rollout of this project."

MICHÈLE CROES | SENIOR MANAGEMENT ASSISTANT @ WATERWEGEN EN ZEEKANAAL NV

REALDOLMEN

info@realdolmen.com
WWW.REALDOLMEN.COM

A. Vaucampslaan 42
B-1654 Huizingen
TEL +32 2 801 55 55