



A NEW FINANCIAL SYSTEM OFFERS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ENTIRE ORGANISATION

'We are impressed by Ultimate Software's domain knowledge, their knowledge of the shipping industry, and also of financial and project administration.'

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In this case study, Derk Matroos, IT project manager at Groningen Seaports, talks about replacing the Exact financial system with the Microsoft Dynamics-based ERP solution FlexPort from Ultimate Software.

An introduction to Groningen Seaports

The Groningen Seaports port authority manages the ports and surrounding industrial sites for the ports of Delfzijl and Eemshaven. In addition to ensuring safe shipping traffic and well-equipped business parks, there is much more to this port company than shipping alone. For Groningen Seaports, it is important that many companies establish themselves in the region. More businesses lead to an increase in shipping traffic for the collection and delivery of raw materials, semi-finished goods, and/or end products. In order to encourage companies interested in setting up in the region, the port authority tries to facilitate or take care of the necessary processes for these companies, such as obtaining permits.

Additionally, Groningen Seaports plays a surprising role in working to add value to an entire supply chain. It tries to connect companies with one another and then ensures that the required facilities are available. For instance, think of companies in the chemical sector where the residual product from one company is a raw material for another. Managing this supply chain reduces the negative environmental impact and the region benefits from a stronger economy.

The port authority also has a large energy cluster; it is especially busy delivering a lot of green energy to data centres. The energy is produced via wind turbines and solar parks; energy produced from hydropower is purchased from Norway, with transfer of source certificates. This is because data centres are specifically looking for a place where they can purchase a lot of green energy at a reasonable cost, and where they also have easy access to cooling water.

CHALLENGE
**CUSTOMISATION WAS
REQUIRED FOR THE
FINANCIAL
ADMINISTRATION OF THE
SHIPPING INDUSTRY**

SOLUTION
**FLEXPORT OFFERS
CUSTOMISATION FOR THE
SHIPPING INDUSTRY**

RESULT
**INFORMATION MORE
FLEXIBLE AND
ACCESSIBLE FROM
ANYWHERE**

“The advantage is that, with the Ultimate Software solution, 100% customisation is no longer required. FlexPort already offers a very good foundation.”

Derk Matroos explains: ‘Two years ago, we found that we needed to replace the financial system and immediately take a step towards a platform that could offer more value to the organisation as a whole. That platform was Microsoft Dynamics. The aim was to be able to meet information needs within the organisation on a much wider scale than had been previously possible. For the administrative and financial handling of the shipping industry, it was important that we be able to implement a certain degree of customisation; Groningen Seaports uses a very specific, rather complex structure for invoicing the shipping activities.’

The advantage is that, with the Ultimate Software solution, 100% customisation is no longer required. FlexPort already offers a very good foundation for the necessary customisation, on the basis of which we were able to make our specific adjustments. This was something we couldn’t find elsewhere on the market. FlexPort is based on Microsoft Dynamics, a platform which we also started using for activities unrelated to shipping, which makes linking between software packages easier. We now have a much more standardised environment and less manual work, and data are more easily unlocked.’

‘Soon we’ll be able to report in an easier and more transparent manner, and more often in real-time. At the moment, all needs are identified and prioritised. In doing this, we’re also looking at where profit can be gained for the organisation as a whole. The new platform no longer runs in-house, now it is in the cloud, which makes us a bit more dependent in terms of performance. On the other hand, the information is certainly more flexible and is accessible--also to our clients--from anywhere. It may well be that the entire organisation will soon benefit from this. Now that data accessibility has improved, it is also possible, for example, to use complex, automated structures for new propositions. Such options can now be explored.’

‘We are impressed by Ultimate Software’s domain knowledge, their knowledge of the shipping industry, and also of financial and project administration. Ultimate Software is good partner and it’s not only staffed by technicians. During the implementation process, they put a lot of effort into the project: work continued until midnight and on the weekends. They are involved, take responsibility, and just go for it. Keep it up!’

