INTELLIGENT PLANNING FOR A HEARTWARMING SERVICE

FAST LEAN SMART. *fls*

Geas Energiewacht has been established for almost 50 years in Twente and in the Achterhoek regions of The Netherlands, each year dealing with more than 210,000 jobs relating to gas and hot water appliances, mechanical ventilation systems, heat recovery units, refrigeration and air conditioning units, heat pumps and pressurized water systems. Approximately 75,000 retail customers are being serviced by 140 technicians.

Innovative IT for leaner processes
GEAS is at the forefront of its market sector with the deployment of innovative IT applications to optimise its processes. Eight years ago, the company started using a digital worksheet for planning which shortened the billing procedure and giving more control over the entire logistical process. This was followed 4 years later with the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV in combination with Prodware PRIMA Suite, thus improving the contract management, logistics and invoicing processes. In 2008 the scheduling of employees was launched using the application ORTEC HARMONY. The exchange of data between these different applications is achieved using the Intelli middleware solution.

The challenge
Due to feedback from users and customers, there were many areas GEAS still wanted to improve:

- Failure to reliably meet customer appointments
- Customer demand for more accurate time windows
- Reduce the number of people who are involved with planning each job
- Reduce unnecessary mileage by the engineers
- Increase first time fix by the engineers
- Ability to reserve capacity
- A customer portal for rescheduling appointments

Geas *Energiewacht*

Industry:
Heating, Ventilation and Refrigeration

FLS product: FLS VISITOUR

Requirements:
- Fast processing of incoming jobs
- Scheduling of appointments within specific timeframes
- Significant reduction in mileage
- Automation of processes
- Standard Software
- Capacity reservation

Features:
- Allocates the most cost effective appointment within seconds during the call
- Integration with Microsoft Dynamics NAV
- Fast implementation

Benefits:
- Increased customer satisfaction
- Significant savings in fuel
- Payback within one year

More information: www.geas.nl

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John Huitink and Jan Ezendam (Technical Office Managers) of Geas led the review of many possible applications and were first introduced to FLS VISITOUR in June 2009. Following workshops and a customer reference visit to Hamburg, the project team decided that FLS VISITOUR was able to meet their requirements in combination with Microsoft Dynamics NAV (Navision).

"The purpose of the proof of concept was to confirm our requirements and see how FLS VISITOUR could support these service processes, as well as to see proof of the productivity savings. FLS had indicated that the planning and route optimisation was able to achieve 10 % to 15 % savings on mileage." says Peter Noordanus. "The first week we took assignments for one of our teams from our old planning system and compared it with the planning of FLS VISITOUR. The conclusion after that week was that by using FLS VISITOUR we did indeed achieve those reductions. We asked ourselves what we had been doing wrong all those years as we have an innovative use of IT. The productivity savings mainly lay in the reduction of travel time and mileage. One aspect is that it is not possible to manually keep up with so many incoming jobs."

Peter continues "We have been using FLS VISITOUR for over a year now and after the busy winter season we can say that our project with FLS VISITOUR was successful. The savings made already means the system has paid for itself. Technically speaking we were ready within 3 months after integration with FLS VISITOUR and our Navision ERP system. Due to the success of the proof of concept we only needed minimal support from FLS, most of this time being focussed on change management."

Customer Contact Centre

Geas has its own call centre which is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Customer satisfaction is imperative, especially during the busy winter period when the number of calls increases and an engineer is required to attend the job on the same day if possible. After capturing the message in Navision, an engineer arrived in most cases on the appointed day, however this may have been using overtime, therefore causing an increase in costs.

The engineers were in postal code teams allowing the dispatcher to allocate jobs cost effectively. As with many different service organisations, planning differs between the beginning of the day and an hour later. With the use of FLS VISITOUR the most cost effective engineer to carry out the job within the customer's preferred timeframe.

This results in increased customer satisfaction, manageable scheduling and route optimisation and reduced costs. Maintenance tasks can be scheduled with FLS VISITOUR and confirmed with the customer by letter or phone.

Management of FLS VISITOUR

Bastiaan Voort (Technical Application Manager) says, "We had prepared the necessary server with an SQL database. The entire application, including database connection was installed within half an hour. That's very fast! It is the same with updates of FLS VISITOUR, the process is fast and easy – an executable file is sent and within 15 to 20 seconds the update is achieved. Before we put it on the production environment itself, we test the update in our test environment."

"Regarding SQL management, we made ourselves a plan for regular backup of our total data. At Geas we have a daily backup, this batch runs at night and we did not have to worry about FLS VISITOUR. With FLS VISITOUR you don't have much to do with SQL. Within the application, there are several tools that will allow the application manager to work easily without consulting the SQL database for this and everything goes through web services. If a field has to adapt, then it is also a piece of cake." Bastiaan Voort explains.

The results

"With regards to the system configuration, we now have enough self-knowledge to adjust the parameters. This was only needed after the integration of FLS VISITOUR." The 'Train the Trainer' concept worked well for us and the application is intuitive" says John Huitink, Head of IT & Quality Assurance, "I have over 20 years of experience in IT and have never before seen a more user-friendly solution. After only half a day introduction, we were not only able to use FLS VISITOUR, but also via the supplied interface XML messages we were able to fill the application with data from Navision. This is possible without programming and without the need for specialist training or knowledge. With FLS VISITOUR, the benefits of automated planning are easy to understand. The simple interface gave us insight on costs, mileage and what the result of the scheduling would be."

"In our search for route optimisation and automated planning we came across FLS VISITOUR. The speed, accessibility and apparent simplicity, combined with the planning expertise of FLS VISITOUR is astounding. FAST, LEAN **AND** SMART!" concludes Peter Noordanus.

FLS contact:
Jeremy Squire · Managing Director · FASTLEANSMART UK LTD.
T +44 1183 800189 · jeremy.squire@fastleansmart.com
www.fastleansmart.com/en

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