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Equans

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE
SUPPLY CHAIN, TOGETHER



Equans

EQUANS GAINS INSIGHT AND
CONTROL OVER CONSUMABLES
AND RETURNS THANKS TO
PIONEERING WORK WITH
SLIMSTOCK

Results & Company profile

- Better stock balance
- 99% service level
- Grip on hire and return

Website:

<https://www.equans.com/>

Country

Belgium, Europe

Industry

Spare Parts

Sector

Industrial Components



"With the enormous amount of master data we have, we are ready to really reap the benefits of the solution we have developed. This benefits the whole of Equans."

Karel Vandermeulen

Supply Chain Manager | Equans

Equans is a leading technical service provider that supports companies in their energy transition and digital transformation. With expertise in HVAC, electricity, automation and industrial processes, Equans offers integrated solutions for a more efficient and

sustainable future.

The company's expertise extends far and wide: from installing solar panels and high-voltage power lines to the technical maintenance of public buildings. To gain control over the use of consumables and tool rentals, Equans has opted for a revolutionary approach in collaboration with Slimstock.

Equans employees work in a wide variety of locations, from hospitals to offshore yards. Various mergers in recent years have led to significant growth, not only in the organisation, but also in its product range. "Everything you can find on a shipyard is now part of Equans' product portfolio, whether it's rescue suits for use at sea or platform ladders for hospitals," says Supply Chain Manager Karel Vandermeulen. He has been with Equans for more than a decade and has seen the organisation grow into the major player it is today.

Geographical spread across Belgium

Equans now has several distribution centres spread across Belgium. This distribution is a conscious choice, considering the country's logistics network. Not all products are available in equal quantities at every location. "We look carefully at which products are needed. The general business strategy is to deliver the goods directly to the site, but in urgent cases, collection from the warehouse is sometimes unavoidable. In that case, speed and accessibility are very important. Traffic in Belgium can sometimes be a problem," says Vandermeulen with a touch of sarcasm.

Nevertheless, the company's approach is logical. "We have three logistics locations: in Zwijndrecht (near Antwerp), Haren (near Brussels) and Fernelmont (near Namur). Items that we need in the ports are stored in Antwerp. They don't need to be stored elsewhere, and vice versa. That saves a lot of logistical work."

References point to Slimstock

Due to the company's growth, the range increased to around 20,000 active stock-controlled items. However, control over the supply chain declined, resulting in many stockouts. Equans Logistics' service-driven strategy required a drastic improvement in delivery performance without increasing overstock or negatively affecting the utilisation rate of the rental fleet.

The increase in scale meant managing hundreds of different Excel sheets. Good inventory management was no longer feasible. “We had to do something,” Vandermeulen recalls.

The need for a modern programme to optimise inventory was clear, but a solution was not immediately available. During a trade fair visit, Equans encountered Slimstock. Several suppliers were already working with Slimstock’s supply chain platform, and the references were convincing enough to choose the award-winning Slim4 supply chain platform.

Higher stock value, greater service level, lower costs

Although the start-up phase during the coronavirus period still presented a somewhat clouded picture, the results quickly followed. “Before we started working with Slim4, our product range was smaller, we had a lower stock value, but we also had a lower service level. However, the growth of the company led to larger inventories, which presented challenges.”

Equans has now been working with Slimstock for several years, and the figures look promising. “Since we started working with Slim4, everything has improved,” Vandermeulen points to last year’s figures, which recorded more than 170,000 order lines. “We have found a better stock balance, and the number of stockouts has been greatly reduced. The service level has now risen to 99%. That is high, but it can always be higher.”

Lack of insight into tools led to unnecessary costs

Equans distinguishes between consumables and tools within its product range. Consumables are used once, while tools can be used multiple times. The problem, however, was that Equans did not have a good overview of the available tools. “For example, colleagues would order a drill for a job, use it once and put it back in the warehouse. Because no one knew the drill was there, another colleague would order another one. This increased costs and put increasing pressure on margins.”

Control over rentals and returns thanks to a revolutionary solution

Equans was looking for a way to gain insight into the rental process for tools, but this proved difficult to manage for a long time. "Renting out tools is complex. You don't always know where something is picked up, where it will be returned and what condition it will be in after use," explains Vandermeulen.

Whereas Slim4 is usually used to optimise sales forecasts, Equans approached Slimstock to see what role Slim4 could play in this area. Together, they developed a solution that manages return flows. "That required a lot of pioneering work, but we have made enormous progress. Our forecasts now also take returns into account. We want to achieve as much as possible with as few tools as possible. With the enormous amount of master data we have, we are ready to really reap the benefits of the solution we have developed. This benefits the whole of Equans."

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