Helicon Opleidingen: Cooperation in education with SAP and Edictis

Legal requirements increase administrative burden for training. Helicon Opleidingen meets this challenge with Edictis, an industry-specific ERP solution from itelligence based on SAP. Helicon deploys Edictis to enhance process quality, given that data relating to students, teachers and corporate clients can be standardized while administered flexibly and efficiently.

Partner

itelligence

Executive overview

Company or Organization
Helicon Opleidingen

Headquarters or Location
Boxtel and Nijmegen,
The Netherlands

Industry
Education

Products and Services
Corporate training,
VMBO and MBO

Employees
900 (2011)

Revenue or Budget
€75 million (2011)

Web Site
www.helicon.nl

Partner
itelligence

BUSINESS TRANSFORMATION

The company's top objectives:
- Improved integration, cooperation and coordination between departments and branches
- A single system for education administration costing, finance, HR and training counseling

The resolution:
- SAP Business All-in-One
- Edictis, industry-specific ERP solution from itelligence
- SAP FI/CO, SAP FI/CA and SAP HCM

The key benefits:
- Simplifies IT management with a company-wide ERP system that replaces various legacy applications
- Improved standardized data registration prevents (coordination) problems at a later stage
- Simplifies data exchange with external parties (including the Information Management Group at DUO, the executive agency of the Dutch Ministry of Education)
- Long-term solution, because other (or new) applications can also run on this platform in future

"We are the first (V)MBO institution to use ERP with Edictis with SAP Business All-in-One. Thanks to this open and flexible solution, departments are able to exchange standardized data automatically, so cooperation is a given."

Henk Burg, Edictis Training Project Leader, Helicon Opleidingen

TOP BENEFITS ACHIEVED

Streamlined administrative process

Improved cooperation between departments

Data exchange with government

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Flexible ERP that supports standardization

Helicon Opleidingen offers 'green' education at the pre-vocational (VMBO) and vocational (MBO) levels in Gelderland and Noord-Brabant. Helicon Bedrijfsopleidingen provides corporate training programs, courses and in-company education for companies throughout the country. The organization faces new legal requirements that result in a higher administrative burden. In order to optimize process quality and maintain control over all legal requirements, Helicon was the first VMBO/MBO institution in the Netherlands to implement company-wide enterprise resource planning or ERP.

After a European tender, Helicon chose Edictis, an industry-specific ERP solution from itelligence based on SAP Business All-in-One. With this solution, Helicon's 12 branch locations and its central services are able to administer student, teacher and corporate client data flexibly, efficiently and in a standardized manner.

The company-wide implementation of SAP ERP and Edictis is how Helicon aims to promote cooperation between administrative departments, training staff and branch locations. Streamlining, registering and consolidating education costs at the schools in Apeldoorn, Boxtel, Den Bosch (2x), Deurne, Eindhoven, Elst, Geldermalsen, Helmond, Kesteren, Nijmegen (2x), Tilburg and Velp is an integral part of this process.

"Thanks to Edictis and SAP Business All-in-One, we are now able to input and modify data, just once, for all of our 12 branches. The same simplicity applies to managing the systems involved."

Henk Burg, Edictis Training Project Leader, Helicon Opleidingen

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‘Increased process control with partners’

According to Henk Burg, program manager for the Edictis project at Helicon Opleidingen, ERP is crucial in education so as to satisfy additional administrative obligations. “The rules change all the time and we increasingly need to cooperate with external parties. Consider, for instance, students who have a personal budget to cover special educational needs. And attendance registration with which the Education Inspectorate hopes to combat truancy.”

“Since laws cannot always be interpreted unambiguously, ERP must be sufficiently flexible to deal with changes, but at the same time compel uniformity in data registration. This will prevent multiple data entry formats, which would result in excessive costs for new reports at a later stage.”

The requirements that Helicon Opleidingen detailed in the European tender resulted in a supplier with an ERP solution. After thorough market research, Helicon concluded that Edictis with SAP Business All-in-One was the best solution for education.

From fragmented data to 1 integrated system

“Thanks to Edictis and SAP Business All-in-One, we are in a position to input and modify data only once. The same simplicity applies to management of the systems involved. When an update is released for a business-critical application, we only have to install and test it once in the integrated system for that component to continue to work effectively with the others. Previously we had to do this for six different applications.”

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Laws open to multiple interpretations entered in the system

The greatest challenge in ERP implementation is interpreting regulatory frameworks and recording respective laws in an information system that not only compels uniformity, but also flexibly handles future changes. As Burg's mentions, "Sometimes interpretation is difficult: for instance, if a student misses 17 hours in a period of four weeks, we are required to report him to the truancy officer, but does a new four-week period begin every week?"

"We are meeting this challenge together with itelligence. Our partnership is based on pre-defined expectations to ensure that the system satisfies the needs of all of those involved - from payroll administration with three employees who use the system on a daily basis to 600 training staff who use the system less frequently. We then continuously coordinated expectations during implementation."

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Promote cooperation and prevent problems

Implementation is phased. Payroll administration, costing and invoicing transitioned almost entirely smoothly soon before the beginning of 2011. Implementation of education support modules, such as care counseling, attendance and performance systems is underway.

Initial benefits? Burg states, "Departments now cooperate more effectively and consider the consequences their changes have on others. New employees and students only need to be registered once and are then recognized by all integrated systems."

"Now that our old applications and in-house Excel applications have become redundant, we have even more control of our processes. For instance, we can set authorizations centrally just once and then they apply to all systems. Update and functional application management require less time, because they are no longer truly different applications."

"Given that Edictis promotes cooperation and coordination between departments, we are able to prevent future problems. Adjustments in one system, such as changes in the roster, are automatically applied to other systems thanks to the link with the roster program UNTIS, thereby requiring less manual work. The 'certificate award' option in the participant tracking system allows the recording of passing or failing grades to be reduced to just a few minutes. It used to take many hours, with increased time to verify all branch locations. So this does not merely represent quality improvement, but cost reduction as well."

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Teaching more despite new tasks

Further, Helicon now has a better control safeguarding sensitive private information. Burg mentions, “Not everyone should be able to view entire student care files. Centralized authorization provides us clear information and allows us to specify the functional groups that can view the files and/or make changes. We then report this information to external parties, such as the DUO/ Information Management Group, via an online portal, thus satisfying our legal obligations quickly and simply.”

Burg concludes, “Now we need better-trained people for some of the work; other work has become simplified and is more in line with our employees’ expertise. The goal is for teachers to spend less time on administration, despite additional administrative burdens. We are still working on the goal of running all systems smoothly and are fully confident that the new solution will prepare us for all desired changes, such as links to CRM and MIP, our Management Information Portal.”

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