

BNN-VARA

Amalgamated national broadcaster BNN-VARA pleased with **Unit4 Business World** and **Unit4 Statutory Reporting**

The situation

In 2012, following government cutbacks to the media budget, broadcasters were encouraged to merge. One of the incentives offered for the new amalgamated broadcasters was an increased programming budget.

BNN and VARA chose each other because their respective offerings complement each other well. BNN is specifically targeted at young people, while VARA produces programs for all areas of society. Both broadcasters screen material that encourages involvement, a critical viewpoint, originality, a drive for innovation, daring and humor. Externally, BNN and VARA will each retain their own identity, but they have been operating as a single broadcasting network since 1st January 2014. The transformation has had a huge impact. Support departments have been amalgamated and around 45 staff made redundant (from a previous total of 500).

“The Board directed us to manage the administrative transition, so that the organization could function as one unit from 1st January 2014,” says financial controller Ruud Fugers at BNN-VARA. “The requirement from management was simple: get it done. They left it to us to decide how.”

“The system’s adaptability allows us to manage process changes ourselves.”

Ruud Fugers, Financial Controller at BNN-VARA



“De Nieuws BV” - daily news program on BNN-VARA’s NPO Radio 1

The needs

Being a newer broadcaster, BNN had already computerized its administrative processes. VARA's administration, however – stretching back almost 90 years – was still largely paper-based. There was a need to computerize the entire administrative flow to make paper invoices a thing of the past. This digital system would notify budget holders (around 20 producers) when an invoice was ready for review. Fugers also wanted to computerize the commitment management processes (for program and series acquisitions) and declaration processing (a few thousand declarations per year). Stakeholders would require a portal for decentralized reporting. "We wanted to make Excel obsolete for this kind of work, in order to gain a more detailed insight with a lower margin for error."



The solution

BNN had been working with Unit4 Business World since 2006, providing a workflow for digital administrative processes. VARA was still using a standard financial management package for its administration. Nevertheless, BNN-VARA embarked upon a careful selection process in early 2013, analyzing the capabilities of a range of different systems. A core principle was that the software chosen would still be able to support the broadcasting network in five years' time. The two systems that made it onto the shortlist both met BNN-VARA's direct requirements, but Fugers found the development roadmap and broader functionality of Unit4 Business World much better than the alternative supplier's offering. Fugers: "If we had opted for VARA's current package, we would have reached the limits of what it could offer within a few years. That's why we chose to keep Unit4 Business World."

Following consultation with Unit4, BNN-VARA chose to re-implement the ERP package.

VARA's processes were decentralized, while BNN was a flat organization. The implementation was based around VARA's administrative processes. "This involved some risk", says Fugers. "Everyone was already swamped because of the merger. Turning administrative processes on their head would have meant too much change in too short a time. I also knew that Unit4 Business World is easily adaptable if we needed to make changes to existing processes. This allowed the VARA processes to remain largely intact – just computerized." Fugers recalls that it was still no easy task to get staff used to the new workflow and the idea that purchase invoices (around 20,000 per year) would require digital approval.

Some employees had been used to the same paper-based way of working for 15-20 years. "We, therefore, put a great deal of effort into emphasizing the advantages of balancing the books digitally. It's quite a change – staring at a screen instead of a side of A4."

Going forwards, the aim is to optimize administrative processes. Fugers is hopeful: "Unit4 Business World's adaptability allows us to easily manage process changes ourselves."

The benefits

- Following the run-in period, budget holders and finance administrators are enjoying the new approval process. They no longer have to photocopy and file everything. Searching for invoices is quicker now that they are stored within Unit4 Business World.
- Decentralized reporting is easier to generate, and "zooming in" on the detail works well. The production of consolidated reports is also more efficient.
- Moreover, there is a "single version of the truth", which is accessible through one, shared portal. This reduces the dependence on individual people.
- Entering invoices quickly became much simpler for staff and the costs involved are immediately clear.
- With commitment management integrated into

Unit4 Business World, budget holders gain a better grasp of a production's expenses and likely outcomes. Furthermore, this will lead to a uniform way of working where nothing is left to individual interpretation.

Ruud Fugers was tasked with the production of an annual report (2014) for the amalgamated BNN-VARA organization for the first time. VARA had always produced its annual reports using Word and Excel, while BNN left this to the accountant. Fugers noted that producing an annual report without the use of specific tools is a very intensive process. BNN-VARA's financial controller wanted to make this much more efficient, partly on the advice of the accountant. Unit4 Statutory Reporting was chosen from the three annual reporting tools evaluated, because of its wide range of features. The software can be easily integrated with Unit4 Business World, which imports the appropriate

financial management information into the reporting tool. "We expect that Unit4 Statutory Reporting will deliver very high efficiency."

Ruud Fugers is pleased with Unit4 Business World and expects to still be working with it in five years' time. "When choosing an automation solution, you're looking at ten years minimum. We may well decide to strategically reposition ourselves in 2024. Unit4 is a financially healthy organization with solid plans for the package's future development."

About Unit4

Unit4 is a leading provider of enterprise applications empowering people in service organizations. With annual revenue north of 500M Euro and more than 4000 employees world-wide, Unit4 delivers ERP, industry-focused and best-in-class applications. Thousands of organizations from sectors including professional services, education, public services, not-for-profit, real estate, wholesale, and financial services benefit from Unit4 solutions. Unit4 is in business for people.

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