



BOUWGROEP MOONEN LOOKS BACK ON THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF 4PS CONSTRUCT

4PS SOLUTION GIVES NEW CORPORATE PHILOSOPHY THE MEANS TO SUCCEED

Carlo van de Ven (project administrator) and Frank Meijer (controller)

Bouwgroep Moonen from 's-Hertogenbosch is certainly not known as a traditional builder. With their new OPEN philosophy they are once again heading down a largely unbeaten track. OPEN stands for 'Original', 'Partnership', 'Enterprising' and 'Now'. OPEN is Moonen's own interpretation of the lean concept: a way of thinking and working that focuses on eliminating waste and creating value in all processes. As a consequence, quality and efficiency will improve, costs will go down, and profit will increase. But perhaps the most important results which Moonen intends to achieve are to increase customer satisfaction and get the most commitment from their own people.

The launch of OPEN coincided – not without reason – with the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics NAV 4PS Construct, the new ERP system. These developments fit hand in glove, explain Frank Meijer and Carlo van de Ven, jointly responsible for the ERP implementation: '4PS Construct makes our OPEN philosophy really tangible for our people!' We take a look back with both these gentlemen at what has proven to be a far-reaching implementation procedure.

There's a new wind blowing through the sector. Age-old beliefs in the construction industry are making way for new, sometimes highly revolutionary ideas. Bouwgroep Moonen, with branches in 's-Hertogenbosch, Breda and Amsterdam, has been ahead of the crowd for quite some time. Carlo van de Ven, project controller at Moonen: 'We have never been a traditional construction company in the sense of "this is what's in the contract documents so this is how we'll do it". We have always looked at the client's actual requirements, at the issue behind the question. What's the best way for us to get through the process together? "Together" being the operative word!'



Newly-built houses in Empel-Zuid

**"TOGETHER"
BEING THE
OPERATIVE
WORD!**

STRESS ALLEVIATION

'We feel very strongly about collaborating with the client,' says Frank Meijer, controller at the construction consortium. 'In our

opinion, our involvement doesn't stop once the building is there. We are keen to carry on with our clients into the aftercare phase, especially when it comes to energy management and maintenance. We aim for long-lasting relationships. Which is why we preferably want to become involved in a project as soon as possible because then we can really demonstrate our expertise and show the added value that we can offer. With OPEN, we would like to get this across even more clearly.'

By doing so, Moonen is responding to the expectation that the market will not be asking for ready-made products quite as much, but rather that the emphasis is going to shift to making lives easier. And this applies not so much to the actual build-



Ave Maria in Tilburg

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ings as such, but to the entire complex of services associated with them. Frank Meijer: 'Corporations, which are important clients for us, are increasingly going back to their core business, which means that



Swaenhof in Oisterwijk

they will be outsourcing the maintenance of their properties more and more.'

FROM SCRATCH

Van de Ven and Meijer have both been advocates within the company for a new ERP system. 'For a while now, we've been running into the limits of our old system,' says Carlo van de Ven. 'Launching the OPEN concept has only thrown this into sharper relief.' Frank Meijer: 'One of the characteristics of OPEN is that we no longer think and work in terms of departments, but in terms of processes. This means that the end of a process is already taken into account during the initial phase. What's more, we want to be able to use one another's data however, whenever and wherever. That is precisely where we hit a brick wall in the old system. As far as that was concerned, we saw no progress whatsoever.'

So the decision was taken to start the search for a new ERP system completely from scratch. So the ICT Information Centre was asked to provide a comprehensive list of all ERP software suppliers operating in the Dutch market.

In order to gain a thorough insight into the criteria which the new ERP system needed to meet, a working group was formed comprising staff who were each indivi-

dually responsible for a specific internal process. Frank Meijer: 'The crucial thing for us was that we didn't want to impose this from the top down. We wanted to create support for it, which is why we asked

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people for each process within Moonen who were not only familiar with the process, but also had clear ideas about which direction we should be taking.'

TRIGGERED TO THINK DIFFERENTLY

This group of key users, who still come together regularly to discuss progress, arrived at several basic criteria which the new ERP system to be acquired needed to meet, based on various specific requirements and areas for improvement. Carlo van de Ven: 'One of the most important conditions was that it had to be a standard package, i.e.

not a customised one. We also wanted at least one independent developer because of the short lines. And because we wanted to be prompted into thinking differently, we wanted to involve a couple of large software houses, but in combination with a partner. Those partners are essential because they have the expertise in our sector. The software houses themselves hardly understand the end user, if at all, even though it goes without saying that they are indispensable for the continuity of the underlying platform.'

The firms that ultimately ended up on the shortlist were invited to come and demonstrate their solutions. Frank Meijer: 'After the demonstrations, Carlo and I already had a clear preference for the 4PS solution. But we left our ultimate decision until after we had visited the working group at 4PS in Ede where our end users were given the opportunity to ask all kinds of questions after a very detailed demo. That's when it clicked on both sides and we chose 4PS once and for all.'

LATEST VERSION

In the spring of 2013, the implementation started. Initially it was based on the predecessor of the current Microsoft Dynamics NAV version, but it included the role-based functionality. (Editor's note: this is the so-

called Role Tailored Client, or RTC, which involves only showing the functionalities which are relevant to a particular function.) When the construction industry holiday came around that year, the implementation was in full swing and Moonen decided – after intense discussions with 4PS – to switch over to the 2013 version which had been launched not that long beforehand. Frank Meijer: '4PS warned us that everything was still at an early stage, that it was a beta version and that there may well be issues. But our reasoning was as follows: we have to convert at some point anyway and we're working on it now.'

'What's more, we were at the cutting edge,' Carlo van de Ven adds. 'Not that we really had a hands-on role in shaping the new version, but we did participate from the sidelines, and our views were taken on board. We definitely gave them feedback.'

Frank Meijer mentions the 'preliminary work' functionality, part of Calculations: 'Unlike most construction companies, during the tendering stage we are used to surveying a great many subcontractors

during a short space of time, sometimes more than one hundred all in all. The aim is to get the best possible price from the market in a short space of time. Initially, it wasn't that easy in 4PS Construct. So we worked hard together with 4PS - and successfully too - on what we called a "substantial functional change". It's at times like these that you notice that they really think along with you.'

WHAT'S MORE, WE WERE AT THE CUTTING EDGE

FLEXIBILITY IS STANDARD

It is not without pleasure that Carlo van de Ven has established that 4PS Construct is much more than just a standard solution. 'The great thing is that we are offered flexibility, despite the fact that we're working with a standard package. To me,

that's quite an achievement. 4PS is prepared to take our requirements into account. This does not mean that they can always meet them, but they are open to them.' Frank Meijer shares his enthusiasm: 'Carlo and I never had reservations. Not about opting for 4PS, and not about our decision to switch to the 2013 version halfway through the process either. It did make the implementation a whole lot more difficult, that's for sure, and we had to get over a few humps along the way. But eventually we found the flexibility we were looking for. We are happy with the outcome, but the most important thing is that our end users will feel the same way later.'

What makes an implementation procedure like this even more difficult is that it requires adjusting existing working methods, and this in the wake of the new corporate philosophy. 'A shift is taking place,' according to Frank Meijer, 'from product-oriented to integrated, process-oriented thinking. That is an investment that we have to make – and want to as well – one which does have the necessary implications, which was not lost on us.'



Heilaar in Noord-Breda



Carlo van de Ven and Frank Meijer

What they may have underestimated in retrospect are the time and effort involved in a process like this. Carlo van de Ven: 'We don't have our own separate

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IT department at our disposal. Which means that it is even more difficult for us to make a proper estimation. Nor did we assign anyone specifically to handle the process. We all had to take on the extra work alongside our normal activities. We managed, but it does mean asking an awful lot of your people.'

CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVING

At the moment, the basic functionalities are the ones mainly being used, according to Frank Meijer, but the aim in due course is to manage numerous other processes via 4PS Construct: 'Here I have in mind the buyers' management process, as well as plan development. In addition to this, we want to press on with the whole service and maintenance story. And we would especially like to do more with portals.' In the interim, however, the emphasis is on rolling out the OPEN philosophy throughout the organisation. That is where most time and energy are going to be spent on for the time being.

As far as that goes, it is a very good thing that OPEN and the 4PS ERP solution go hand-in-hand. 'They complement each other perfectly,' says Carlo van de Ven. 'It's great to see how the implementation of 4PS Construct makes the completely new philosophy really tangible for our people.' He can see an unmistakable progression: 'We can see things happening. We went live in January. After nine months we had

slowly but surely gone through the phase of getting used to things. Things are going well, but there is always room for improvement. We still have so many requirements and the package has so much to offer. You are never finished; it's an ongoing process.' Which is why he turned down - with a big fat wink - the cake that 4PS invariably has delivered after completing a successful implementation. 'No, the work is never done. You carry on working, together, for the long term. Which is the way it should be in a proper partnership!'

COMPANY PROFILE

Moonen Construction Group is situated in 's-Hertogenbosch, Breda and Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and is involved in the fields of construction, renovation, revitalization and service and maintenance. Moonen employs approximately 145 employees.

BRIEF FACTS

COMPANY

Bouwgroep Moonen
www.bouwgroepmoonen.nl

ACTIVITIES

Developer and builder of houses, buildings, Service & Maintenance
MODULES

Customer Relationship Management, Service & Maintenance, Planning, Acquisition, Purchasing, Sales, Document Management, Project Management, Buyer Management, Finance, Salary

NUMBER OF CONCURRENT USERS
30