MULTI-CHEM® SELECTS BP LOGIX TO AUTOMATE HR AND BUSINESS PROCESSES

Multi-Chem® is a premier global oilfield production chemicals company. Multi-Chem offers oilfield products, gas well treatments and pipeline solutions designed to enhance production throughout the world.

Focusing on the high level of oilfield activity required to meet the worldwide energy demand, the company leverages its comprehensive portfolio of products and leading edge application techniques. Multi-Chem® employs its products and technologies to meet the chemical challenges associated with production, processing and transportation of oil and gas. The company excels at creating solutions that drive results.

Multi-Chem provides production chemicals that address issues such as flow assurance, enhanced gas recovery, fracturing technology and pipeline treatments. With customers worldwide, Multi-Chem has been one of the fastest-growing companies in the production chemicals industry. The company is headquartered in San Angelo, Texas, with offices and operations around the world.
THE NEED FOR A MORE FORMAL AND AUDITABLE PROCESS

Jim Honea is Director of Technology responsible for Multi-Chem’s software acquisition and integration, as well as internal development. Most recently Honea has been responsible for integrating Multi-Chem’s infrastructure software with Halliburton applications, as Multi-Chem is now a Halliburton service.

Providing quality solutions and ongoing communication to companies like Chevron, Chesapeake Energy, EOG and Occidental Petroleum is an important aspect of Multi-Chem’s support and focus—and has contributed significantly to the company’s growth.

Since his team supports 700 internal users, Honea recognized the need to pinpoint the status of approvals required and the disposition of key documents. These documents ranged from new hire requisitions to training, leave of absence and vacation requests. Honea wanted a solution that would reflect the processes employees were currently using, control the workflow of those processes and identify the location of specific documents and their status. He wanted to move away from hard copy forms and inefficient processes—and hoped to be able to streamline and standardize the company’s processes with the right tool. Honea wanted to find a software solution that would address Multi-Chem’s immediate needs—but to also scale to meet future requirements. “Many of our processes seemed to go into a dark hole. We needed something that was electronic, much more precise than email, and that would control the workflow of the processes. We wanted to be able to ask the question: Where is the document and who has approved it?” Honea remarked.

Honea wanted to create a more formal environment, one that could be monitored and audited. He recognized that the handwritten forms were not always completed correctly and submitters often forgot to include critical information like their cost centers. This further delayed document approval and led to inefficiencies. Honea also recognized that, since the company was growing and hiring new people, it would be impossible to train every person submitting every form to include all the required information.

He believed that, with the proper software tool, he could increase efficiency, impose more checks and balances in the process—and ensure that all documents went through the proper channels.

IDENTIFYING WORKFLOW SOLUTIONS

According to Honea, “We had a process that was inefficient and ineffective and we were being asked to come up with a suitable solution. We looked at whether we could do this internally and quickly concluded that it was too much work to do ourselves. So we decided to evaluate third party applications in order to find the best fit for Multi-Chem.”

Honea’s team developed a set of criteria for an electronic workflow solution. They needed to: 1) Know where a form was at any point in time, 2) Be able to send email alerts and electronic notifications, 3) Provide electronic signatures, 4) Ensure that information (for example name and date) was standardized and 5) Be able to designate who could see and submit forms. The team began its search by Googling electronic forms and workflow and decided to review Adobe, Sharepoint, InfoPath from Microsoft and Process Director from BP Logix. Additional considerations included: 1) Whether the product selected could mirror yet improve on existing business processes, 2) Not require a significant amount of configuration to work the way users currently worked and 3) Would provide significant value for the money.
Over a period of two months, the team participated in demos and presentations of the four products. They evaluated and compared notes, weighed product features and costs and selected Process Director. “We were confident that Process Director could do everything we wanted and more—and comfortable that BP Logix provided the best value proposition,” Honea confirmed.

COMPANY-WIDE ACCEPTANCE AND USE

Multi-Chem branded the Process Director “eDocs” and started with a Personnel Request Form (PRF). According to Honea, the intent was to create a form that was as intuitive, foolproof and as user friendly as possible. The PRF, used for new hires and new positions, was one of the company’s most critical forms. While the form creation itself required some initial effort, it also gave Honea significant control, control that had not existed with the previous process. “Once the PRF was created, we emailed employees to go to the portal and locate the form. We didn’t have to do a lot of training because we built the form to guide users as they were completing it. And our VP’s like the fact that they can approve forms from their Blackberries, no matter where in the world they are traveling,” declared Honea.

The company subsequently developed forms and workflows for Capital Expenditures, Health and Safety, Training and Customer Profiles. While the people involved in its processes are quite diverse, there is a uniform acceptance of the new intuitive browser-based system. Employees appreciate the ease of use—and the efficiencies they have gained. Honea’s group appreciates that Process Director enables internal departments to more easily and accurately track documents—and their progress.

In addition to being able to identify the approval status of given documents, Multi-Chem employees are also saving time and money. There is also no longer a need to FedEx documents between locations and departments; Process Director’s electronic “audit trail” tracks approvals and authorizations so that the status of any document is immediately known and the completed or pending approvals are visible. And with employees receiving email notifications as new documents are checked in, routing slips are automatically generated so that they can instantly interact with the new documents.

BECOMING MORE PRODUCTIVE AND EFFICIENT

The PRF has been a very successful form and process—so much so that the form itself has been expanded and is now being used to transfer employees, handle promotions and new requisitions, as well as a number of other HR functions. Multi-Chem managers appreciate that the actions are now clearly delineated in the PRF—and that the separate forms that were previously required are no longer necessary. As importantly, the process itself has been revised to reflect the expanded functionality of this form.

Honea’s team is also pleased with the acceptance of Process Director. Recently he received a request from the group that builds and remodels facilities worldwide. In the past, when this group received a request to build a new lab or warehouse, that request has traditionally been made via a paper document. The Facilities Manager, however, had heard about eDocs from his colleagues—and had personally received Training Request Forms, Capital Expenditure Forms and other HR forms electronically. He contacted Coronado and requested that a new form be created to reflect the business process used for these kinds of requests.

“I created a questionnaire that we call the eDocs Initial Project Requirements. That collects information on the need for the form, who is involved with the form, who approves it, if there is a current process, whether there is
A current workflow, if there is an existing form and who needs to be notified,” observed Honea. His team then reviews the questionnaire and contacts the group (in this case, the Facilities group) to formulate a project plan. “We are pleased that this manager knew the benefits of having electronic workflows and approvals – and that he contacted us. We know how to build the forms and now have the time to assist him,” he added.

A PROCESS THAT SUPPORTS BUSINESS USERS

While the initial impetus for implementing an electronic workflow and approval process belonged to the IT group, it is no longer the case. Selecting Process Director is an IT decision that has helped the business. Honea reports that employees are so used to working this way that the system itself has become a valuable part of the way Multi-Chem does business.

“It is obvious that we are a lot more efficient. We can now quantify employee hours worked and vacations, properly assign company vehicles based on title, and enforce company policies. If we needed to hire a new sales person and did not have the ability to route the forms electronically, it could cost us lost opportunities – and that translates to money,” commented Honea.

The greatest benefit Multi-Chem has received from deploying Process Director, however, is that it has standardized its business processes. “All of our processes are now captured in eDocs – and they are more fluid and efficient. Our forms are less likely to get lost and we have found that everyone knows where to find the forms in order to complete them. We no longer hear from the initiating departments as to the status of their forms. Process Director is a very powerful tool and it is obvious that we are more effective and efficient having deployed it,” concluded Honea.

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