TIMEXTENDER | **AmbaFlex** SCIENCE IN SPIRALS | **PINK**

AmbaFlex keeps its data flowing with TimeXtender's Discovery Hub®

For Dutch company AmbaFlex, world leader in spiral conveying solutions, a period of expansion and updating was the perfect time to integrate TimeXtender's Discovery Hub®

A BUSINESS BUILT ON KEEPING THINGS MOVING

Once you start thinking about the practical applications of the spiral within modern, automated factories, it's hard to stop. Add a spiral to a conveyor belt system and you can safely and gently changing product elevation within a production line, or change direction, or both. A spiral stack can temporarily hold products when one section of the line runs slower than another. A spiral can even be used to feed multiple conveyor lines into a single flow, or go the other way and split one line off into many.

Most of us have never thought about this because we don't have to. For Dutch company AmbaFlex, though, this is //all// they think about. With production plants in the US, the Netherlands, Romania and China, AmbaFlex designs, build, installs and maintains conveyor solutions for manufacturing, distribution and warehousing businesses around the world. Sales offices in several other countries plus main offices in the Netherlands give AmbaFlex a workforce of around 400 people.

WHEN INFORMATION JUST STARTS GOING ROUND AND ROUND...

"In our business we have a lot of information," says Bart Koning, AmbaFlex's Business Intelligence Developer. "I call it 'information hunger'. We want to know exactly all the sales information, so that we can see which orders are in the pipeline in order to prepare the manufacturing plants."

Until a year ago, though, AmbaFlex's problem was that the company's insatiable information hunger was barely being met by thousands of Excel spreadsheets. Auch a system made it possible for multiple versions of the same information to be in circulation, while gaining insights based on data stored across numerous documents was virtually impossible.

It was clear that the logistics part of the business – the financial, transactional and order data – needed to be handled in a more manageable, flexible and automated way. Similarly, customer and HR data was also in need of an overhaul. A tipping point of sorts was reached when AmbaFlex also decided that it was time to change its CRM and ERP systems over the new versions, which added the problem of what to do with all of its legacy data.

MANUFACTURING

CUSTOMER BACKGROUND
- Producer of world-class customized spiral conveying systems
- Headquarters in the Netherlands, with a global reach
- www.AmbaFlex.com

CHALLENGES
- Rapid annual growth and a need to modernize made AmbaFlex review its data-handling systems
- Legacy systems and historical customer and product data meant integrating the old with the new
- Existing Excel spreadsheets offered little in the way of data analysis

BENEFITS
- AmbaFlex partnered with Pink Elephant to find the best-fit solution
- Pink Elephant proposed Discovery Hub® and Qlik's visualization and analytics tools
- The previous Excel spreadsheet system was replaced by a unified system

SOLUTION
- A data warehouse provides a single version of the truth that works with legacy systems
- Discovery Hub® allows the scheduling and loading of data with automated data lineage
- On-site training and user-friendly interfaces allow a single AmbaFlex employee to cater for the entire business

"We knew we were looking for a tool to build our own data warehouse," explains Bart, "but we also needed an easy reporting service too because of the challenges we were experiencing with our Excel spreadsheets."

A SINGLE SOLUTION TO SERVE THE ENTIRE BUSINESS

Two years ago, AmbaFlex started to talk to Dutch company Pink Elephant about the challenges it was facing with data. Pink Elephant proposed a solution based around TimeXtender's Discovery Hub® and also Qlik software for data visualization.

This combination was offered not just because the two systems work so well together to provide and display data and insights. Discovery Hub® is also capable of feeding legacy data into the data warehouse, allowing old systems containing historic product and customer data to be maintained while new data is fed into the modern system. Discovery Hub® also automates data lineage, providing detailed information of when and where the data was created, as well as who last updated and even who lost saw it.

AmbaFlex implemented these new systems department by department, with Bart handling all requests for information from the entire business. Most staff remain largely unaware of Discovery Hub®, apart from the fact that they now don't have to wait as long for information that is now more accurate and up-to-date.

With implementation around 80% completed across the company, AmbaFlex is now benefiting from Discovery Hub®'s ability to schedule, load and combine data from numerous sources in the data warehouse.

"By creating different data models for the key users of Qlik, they can now do their daily job much faster," notes Bart. "In the Qlik models, they can see data becoming available that they didn't have before, even if they don't know why. And of course, when I edit a new layer of data – for example purchase orders – that information is available across the business."

\\ One huge advantage is that data can be scheduled. With the previous Excel spreadsheet system, you never knew where the data was from, which made validation very hard. We now also know the source of the data, which we didn't have before.

Bart Koning, Business Intelligence Developer, AmbaFlex

You're in good company

TimeXtender's Discovery Hub® provides companies with instant access to data, enabling them to make quality business decisions with data, mind and heart. Because time matters.

To learn more about Discovery Hub® and how the power of automation can move your business forward, visit:

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