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QUESTIONS ABOUT PARTNERING WITH ULTIMO

Pontifexx is a pragmatic consultancy agency from the Netherlands with 35 asset management specialists. Since August 2020, they have been active as an Ultimo implementation partner for the Dutch market. Pontifexx services over 400 customers who use Ultimo. We will be asking Johan van de Pol, Commercial Director at Pontifexx, six questions about the partnership with Ultimo.



1. HOW DID THE PARTNERSHIP WITH ULTIMO COME ABOUT?

Johan: "We have known about Ultimo as one of the leading maintenance management systems since 2012 because our businesses are quite similar. In terms of type of business as well as in culture and philosophy. In 2020, we worked out the partnership and since then we have been acting as an Ultimo implementation partner.

One of the reasons was that we wanted more control over communications with Ultimo and the requirements customers handed us. Pontifexx knows its customers' maintenance strategies and helps them expand. In that capacity, we can make sure the software fits these strategies. And now we no longer need Ultimo for every setting we want to change, but we can change it ourselves. So it has made us much more flexible

In the implementation partnership we saw a business model with which we could add more value for our customers and at the same time improve our position as a business."

2. WHY CHOOSE ULTIMO'S PLATFORM?

"Ultimo's software is very intuitive. And in all honesty, not everyone working with Ultimo is as digitally skilled. So registering and managing work shouldn't take too much time. With Ultimo you can finish your work with only a few mouse clicks. It's quick, the navigation is logical and it's easy to scale up your functionality with additional modules. The easy scalability is especially convenient when a company grows and needs additional features.

Another thing I appreciate in Ultimo is that they change with the times. Think of Industry 4.0 developments. The foundations of the Ultimo software are already great, but with the innovative roadmap that they present each year, they keep improving on it. And by integrating with a number of technology partners they keep adding more value. This keeps making it easier for customers to use IoT solutions to carry out predictive maintenance or remote management using virtual reality."

3. WHAT VALUE DOES THE PARTNERSHIP WITH ULTIMO ADD FOR YOUR CUSTOMERS?

"We can now provide customers with a truly comprehensive plan regarding asset management and the long-term maintenance strategy. To illustrate: If before we were the electrician, we are now the contractor. This makes Pontifexx the central point of contact for customers for all issues relating to asset management. Think of the combination of a maintenance strategy and a spare parts plan that we can now offer them in full. Because we can now link our maintenance expertise directly to the functionality of the software, we bridge the divide between strategy and operations."

4. WHAT QUANTIFIABLE RESULTS DOES THE PARTNERSHIP BRING PONTIFEXX?

"We can tell that customers come to appreciate us more because we can communicate with them about Ultimo more directly and adapt much more quickly. We are quite literally at the controls. When we look more at the figures, we can see that at least part of our 20% growth of the past year can be attributed to the additional Ultimo implementations. In the past year, our customer portfolio has grown by 50 new customers. .

Part of this is because of leads and projects we receive from Ultimo regularly, but we have also seen that this partnership has made us more visible for customers. The joint reach and the reputability of Ultimo has most definitely attributed. Customers see in trade journals and on online platforms that we carry out Ultimo implementations and find their way to us more easily that way."

5. HOW DO YOU SEE THE ROLE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN THE ASSET MANAGEMENT WORLD?

"Just a few examples; on the shop floor, many people still work a lot with separate Excel files and even physical boards to record the status of certain activities. This means, however, that management never has real-time insight into the current situation so decisions are often made too late or on the basis of incomplete data. One of Ultimo's and Pontifexx's joint technology partners that tackles this is EZ Factory. These data are shared much more efficiently with visual, digital checklists and instructions, which improves the communication between the shop floor and management.

Our joint customer Dutch Nutrition uses the link between EZ Factory and Ultimo to work more efficiently and close the communication gap.

Our customers also use links between Ultimo, purchasing systems and financial systems. Think of AFAS and Microsoft Dynamics. This provides insight into the financial transactions of the technical service. That way material flows (in Ultimo) and financial flows (in the ERP or finance software) are connected. This saves time and effort for the technical service, simply because information is accessible in both systems with only a few clicks. Companies like Vreugdenhil and European Bulk Services already use these links.

We do see that the industry itself is still a little reluctant to embrace all these new technologies. And yet I would like to encourage everyone to start using them. Ultimo truly offers the opportunities to manage assets innovatively and efficiently. You need both people and technology to get the most out of your assets. Sometimes the technical service and the operators blame each other for the lack of proper maintenance. But this can all be solved with software, so it is time to shake hands!"

6. WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU LIKE TO GIVE (POTENTIAL) ULTIMO PARTNERS?

"Invest in properly trained consultants. Don't underestimate how important knowledge of the Ultimo platform is to be able to really help customers. At the start, knowledge of Ultimo was very fragmented in our company. So, we invested considerably in training and courses, which is really starting to pay off. With the 11 consultants who are currently trained to implement Ultimo, we have a group in which we exchange knowledge. Ultimo just launched a programme to following training courses online, with online course materials and demo videos. This is a great help in onboarding consultants quicker.

And also: make sure you know how to find Ultimo. And keep lines of communication short. Call, e-mail and meet each other regularly. Make sure the right people on strategic, tactical and operational level stay in touch."