



Lift
Manufacturer

ePLAN[®]
electric⁸

ePLAN[®]
fluid

HUISMAN-ITREC

Letting EPLAN
do the heavy lifting

A wide range of benefits

For Dutch heavy lift manufacturer Huisman-Itrec, adopting the latest EPLAN software has meant a great deal more than adding state-of-the-art automation tools. Huisman-Itrec approaches software upgrades strategically to achieve the widest range of benefits. The company builds large cranes for ships, shipyards and ports as well as load-moving devices, pipe-laying equipment and offshore drilling platforms. Known for fostering innovation and creativity, it likes to be on the cutting edge of automated design.

The timing of a software upgrade isn't as important as freeing up the time and resources to do it right, says Yvo Visscher, an electrical engineer who has been working almost full-time overseeing the introduction of EPLAN Electric P8 at Huisman-Itrec's engineering department at Schiedam, close to Rotterdam. There's never a convenient time to do a software implementation.

ePLAN your engineering

FRIEDHELM LOH GROUP

Huisman-Itrec often chooses to be an early adopter of new versions of EPLAN software, or as Jens Ekelaar, Manager, Electrical Department, puts it, "We are often the guinea pigs when there's a new update." And it's ready to share some best practices in managing upgrades in a large industrial environment.

EPLAN FLUID

for working in the
hydraulics department

“You sometimes go down a certain path, and over time, it becomes less efficient or unnecessarily complex,” says Jens Ekelaar. “People think it’s too hard to change, but I think that’s wrong. Our transition to EPLAN Electric P8 was a great opportunity to start with a clean slate. This is something we do consciously. Look at our component database. It’s now 10 times smaller. It’s good to look at outdated processes once in a while.”



A company has to make the commitment to the project and respect it. “Don’t underestimate the kind of demands it will make. Take it seriously and free someone up to coordinate the job. Done right, it will definitely bear fruit. With EPLAN Electric P8, we began to work in a structured manner.”

Follow a strategy

Upgrading requires a strategy, even for adopting the latest version of existing software. Each EPLAN release has new features, says Yvo Visscher. “This adds complexity, so you have to weigh what you do and do not wish to use. You have to delineate it in order to keep it streamlined – so it’s important that you determine your strategy for using it in advance.”

Chance to clean house

Huisman-Itrec uses the launch of upgraded design software as the occasion to do some house-keeping. Switching from EPLAN 5 to the new EPLAN Electric P8 in the electrical department provided an opportunity to revise entrenched practices as did introducing EPLAN Fluid in the hydraulics department, says Jens Ekelaar.

Macros now a lot easier to use

Implementing EPLAN Fluid also introduced a more structured way of working in the hydraulics department. That was done in the context of synchronizing project work with the electrical department. Today, the hydraulics engineers see that as a big plus “and yet at the start they were not at all interested in a different way of working,” says Jens Ekelaar. “This year we will start linking EPLAN Fluid and EPLAN Electric P8. This will result in even more major advantages.”



ePLAN[®]
electricP8

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PHASING

in

EPLAN Electric P8

The company took a gradual approach in introducing EPLAN Electric P8. Everyone in the electrical department got full training on the program. Next, the engineers began to familiarize themselves with functions like using macros before they even tried to do a project in EPLAN Electric P8. "This program is a lot more flexible," says Yvo Visscher. "You can create and use macros a lot more easily. You had macros in EPLAN 5, but now that function can be accessed with a click of a mouse and is structured more logically. The first project we tackled in EPLAN Electric P8 was one we had already done 90% of the work on in EPLAN 5." The expanded role of macros and the standardization it imposes on product development translates into a substantial increase in departmental productivity, an important consideration for a growth-oriented company like Huisman-Itrec operating in a tight Dutch job market.

Huisman was founded almost eight decades ago. The Itrec in the name was a company formed more recently to perform virtually all engineering and design work in-house. Most of the cranes, pipe-laying and load-moving devices are custom-built to the customer's requirements. The technical and creative concept department (Itrec) develops the design. The subsequent engineering of the steel and drives takes place via basic and detailed design, after which shop drawings are made. These are then sent to one of the company's three manufacturing sites – Schiedam, the Czech Republic or China – where the product is made. Only after the product is tested – on board ship in the case of a crane – is the final transfer to the customer completed.

Big jobs made easier

Basic EPLAN automation features that are appreciated by all sizes of companies are especially valuable when every project is as big as a ship's crane or offshore drilling rig. Features like automated list-building, cross-referencing or error-checking. "The self-correcting ability of EPLAN has always appealed to us, and still does," says Yvo Visscher. "Doing error-checking manually is a disaster. Luckily, it's not something you need to do in EPLAN. This means that huge projects are more manageable." Recently, the company looked at various 3-D software packages for the mechanical engineering department. Some of these providers offered electrical engineering packages. That gave Huisman-Itrec a chance to compare their products with EPLAN. EPLAN Electric P8 came out on top and has proved its worth since. "EPLAN Electric P8 has definitely helped make us more efficient," says Jens Ekelaar.

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“Standardisation with EPLAN is a major advantage” says Jens Ekelaar. “The engineer can work on the basis of the same approach each time. When we accomplished the first project, it was something we had already completed 90% based on the previous version. It really increases the efficiency. We wanted a standard. Now we have it, and we impose it, both internally and on third parties. It determines our strategy.”

Huisman-Itrec is growing with EPLAN SUMMARY

Huisman-Itrec is growth-oriented, and it's been growing with EPLAN having begun several years ago with EPLAN 5 and one license. Later, EPLAN 5 was replaced with EPLAN Electric P8 and EPLAN Fluid has been added in the hydraulics department to automate engineering and design. Currently Huisman-Itrec is using 19 licenses worldwide. “What does automation mean to us?” says Jens Ekelaar. “If you want to grow as an organization, you need it – otherwise, you get chaos. EPLAN provides structure, efficiency, and keeps everything manageable.”

Find out more about Huisman-Itrec on www.huismanequipment.com

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