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nicetec netinsight – More insight into IT service costs



About RHENUS

Rhenus Group is a logistics service provider operating worldwide with a turnover of 5.4 billion euros. With more than 33,500 employees, Rhenus is active at over 820 locations. Complex supply chains and innovative value-added services are managed by the three business units Contract Logistics, Freight Logistics and Port Logistics. As a provider of tailor-made end-to-end solutions, Rhenus also takes on a wide range of tasks, such as providing assembly areas for plant construction or intermodal container logistics services.

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Rhenus Freight Network GmbH takes off with integrated IT Financial Management

Supply bottlenecks, production stops and empty shops: the Corona pandemic in 2020 impressively demonstrated how important the smooth organization of international flows of goods is for the economy and consumers. Logistics service providers such as Rhenus Logistics create the basis for this: they supply supermarkets with fresh goods, provide manufacturing companies with the components they need and bring new refrigerators, washing machines and dishwashers directly to the end customer.

Within the Rhenus Group, the Rhenus Freight Logistics business unit is not only responsible for transporting goods by road, rail, sea or air, but also takes care of customs formalities and supply chain solutions tailored to individual customers, for example. The numerous branches in Europe, Asia-Pacific, North and South America as well as in the Middle East and Africa ensure that the global transport of goods goes ahead unhindered.

Complex billing processes simplified

Rhenus Freight Network GmbH provides the technological foundation for this. As Shared Service Center, the company develops standardized software solutions for managing, optimizing and controlling Rhenus transport processes. "The objective here is always to find agile and customer-oriented solutions and to implement new requirements in the best possible way and as quickly as possible for the business," explains authorized signatory Hauke Beenders.



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"The solution already covers all of our process requirements in the standard version and also scores high on flexibility."

Petra Finke, Global CIO
Rhenus Freight Logistics

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"In doing so, we take care of the complete lifecycle of our solutions, including user support in the Rhenus Transport division." The IT service provider operates a large number of special applications for Rhenus Freight Logistics and invoices its broad service and project portfolio to approx. 200 internal customers every month.

However, this is easier said than done: First, the development, administration and support costs as well as the consumption data have to be allocated to the respective applications and projects and charged to the customers and business segments Road and Air & Ocean. Since SAP is used in the group, the generated billing data then had to be transferred to the Rhenus SAP system for invoicing.

In order to automate this process and increase cost transparency for management and customers alike, Petra Finke, Global CIO of Rhenus Freight Logistics, decided to put the IT Financial Management at the IT service provider on a new foundation. As part of a selection process, Rhenus evaluated various IT Financial Management solutions on the market and ultimately chose netinsight from nice-tec. "The solution already covers all of our process requirements in the standard version and also scores high on flexibility," says the IT manager, summing up the important decision criteria.

Today, netinsight contributes to a streamlined and transparent IT financial management at the Rhenus Freight Logistics Shared Service Center. Routine tasks such as the issuing of the monthly statement and the subsequent posting in SAP are now fully automated. "Tasks that used to take two to three working days per month are now completed within a few hours," reports Berit Lambardt, Controller at Rhenus Freight Network GmbH.



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"All allocations are rule-based, formula and transmission errors are a thing of the past."

Berrit Lambardt, Controller
Rhenus Freight Network GmbH

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Through the extensive process automation, the quality could be increased and the error rate reduced to a minimum at the same time. Where previously the Excel-based activity allocation blocked the view of the essentials, the nicetec platform now creates maximum transparency. "All allocations are rule-based, formula and transmission errors are a thing of the past," Lambardt is pleased to say. The monthly statement is now also created in no time at all with the help of the new solution.

Cost transparency facilitates budget negotiations

In addition to reporting and activity allocation, Rhenus Freight Network also uses the nicetec software for simulations, forecasts and budgeting. "This was one of the main reasons for us to implement the solution," explains Beenders. In the past, the planning processes for costs and budgets were extremely time-consuming and complex. After all, the required information had to be gathered manually from a wide variety of data sources and consolidated and prepared with a great deal of effort and a large number of Excel spreadsheets.

There was also significant potential for optimization in the area of IT controlling, as all IT service costs were posted to collective objects in the SAP system, making a detailed evaluation of the various circumstances virtually impossible. This lack of transparency not only made active cost management and the targeted further development of the service portfolio more difficult. It also repeatedly gave rise to discussions during budget negotiations and service charging: "The management and internal customers want to know what costs are incurred for what and how our charging prices are made up in detail," explains Beenders. By using netinsight, the data can now be filtered and reported in detail according to a wide range of dimensions at the touch of a button.



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"The longer I work with the solution, the more it excites me. netinsight really offers everything you need to manage a complex service organization."

Hauke Beenders, Prokurst
Rhenus Freight Network GmbH

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This reduces friction losses and provides the IT service provider with a sound basis for its own business development. "Thanks to netinsight, we can now continuously track whether our service and project teams are covering costs or whether we need to readjust if necessary."

Order in the data jungle

As part of the introduction of the solution, Rhenus Freight Network had to carry out some preliminary work. "We had to put our data in order, set up new structures and improve the quality of the data," says controller Berrit Lambardt. After that, everything went like clockwork: Within a few months, the project team had the new solution up and running.

Since then, netinsight has become an indispensable part of the IT service provider's everyday work: thanks to the integrated planning and calculation functions, target and actual figures can be compared at the touch of a button, intra-year forecasts can be created in no time at all, and service prices can be calculated and charged in a cost-covering and traceable manner.

Quantity data on service usage and cost data are automatically transferred from upstream applications. This enables reporting at product level, from which the profitability of individual services can be seen in detail. No comparison to the manual reporting of the past: "The longer I work with the solution, the more it excites me," Beenders enthuses. "netinsight really offers everything you need to manage a complex service organization."



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Further development of the solution planned

The overall potential of the platform is far from exhausted: "There's a lot more, we're working on," says Lambardt. For example, there are plans to consolidate invoices that were previously run separately via other systems into netinsight in order to create an overall invoice for the customer. Rhenus is also introducing the solution at other IT locations of the group in Asia and the Netherlands.

The expansion is not too much of a headache for those responsible – not least because the support from the manufacturer nicetec leaves nothing to be desired. "The consultants have a lot of project experience and understand what drives us," praises Beenders. "Our contacts are always available to us and actively support us in achieving our goals."

After go-live and the hypercare phase, the need for support from the manufacturer has been reduced to a minimum. The Rhenus team now implements new requirements themselves and with ease. Optimal conditions for smooth billing processes and transparent IT service costs.



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