



Royal Wagenborg modernizes business applications with the Thinkwise low-code platform

Royal Wagenborg, one of Europe's largest shipping companies, uses the Thinkwise low-code platform to modernize its legacy ERP platform. This enables the family business to greatly optimize its operations and be ready for the future.

Royal Wagenborg is a shipping company, with a fleet of 170 ships and branches around the whole world, that ships various kinds of dry cargo for companies between North-West Europe, North America, and the Mediterranean.

After 20 years, their in-house developed software platform built with LANSA on AS/400 was due for replacement. The platform supported all the unique business processes for the many divisions of the international organization but was so technically outdated that it inhibited Wagenborg from further integration and optimization of its business operations. Arie Versluis, ERP Program manager at Royal Wagenborg, found Thinkwise to be the right platform to support this substantial modernization process: "Thinkwise has proven that low-code is the best solution for Wagenborg to advance both its IT and its business."

Compartmentalized structure

According to Arie, one of the most important objectives when opting for Thinkwise was the elimination of the compartmentalized IT structure. "Wagenborg performs many of its shipping operations in-house, but because of the limited integration of IT solutions, we didn't really reap the benefits of that. There was a strong need for a 'single source of truth'".

The two companies got on well together, and Arie Versluis was convinced by the strength and potential of the development platform: "Thinkwise has demonstrated for 20 years that it continues to innovate its technology for the users of the platform. This is inherent to its proposition. No other low-code vendor has a proven track record of keeping up with technological developments over such a long period of time."

Sustainable choice

In order to stay at the helm during the project, Wagenborg set up and trained a Thinkwise team. This team consisted of Low Code developers and Business Analysts from Wagenborg, supported by process owners from the business. This team, supported by Thinkwise, developed the software and became fully self-sufficient in just over a year.

Arie Versluis: "There is always a learning curve when you start developing on your own using a new platform. As such, it is a sustainable choice. Wagenborg now has the expertise in-house and in the minds of our people and doesn't have to rely on external consultants. The organization has gone through an amazing learning process, during which Thinkwise has helped us tremendously in setting up certain standard functionality, processes and structures. And by pointing us to opportunities that we were not aware of."



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Scalable, secure and user friendly

To best meet Wagenborg's requirements, the Thinkwise Platform was deployed serverless on Amazon Web Services (AWS). This makes the platform automatically scalable, minimizes maintenance overhead and allows for easy integration with other AWS services, such as software interfaces and document storage.

In addition, Wagenborg decided to take advantage of the Thinkwise Universal GUI from the start. This ensures that every application developed with the platform is automatically available on every device via the browser and as a Progressive Web App. This gives the user a consistent and intuitive experience and saves the IT department a lot of time in software development and maintenance.

To make the platform as user-friendly and secure as possible, Wagenborg uses the Open ID integration with Azure Active Directory available in the platform. This allows for Single Sign-On with the Thinkwise Platform, and combined with Multi-Factor Authentication, makes logging in not only more convenient, but also more secure.

Shorter turnaround times

Wagenborg started the process by modernizing Chartering, the commercial department where according to Arie the greatest benefit could be achieved compared to the old system. The customer database and the CRM system were initially modernized, including all commercial leads and opportunities. This was followed by the contract management system, which represents a large part of the Wagenborg business.

"There was also a lot to be gained by better structuring the administration. Any known information about a customer can now be easily retrieved from the existing database whenever they book a new transport. We can now start scheduling ships directly by filling in just five fields, and the communication is also handled from within the system."

In addition, several things have been automated and improved, including a calculation module for the calculation of commercial rates, and activity planning has become far more transparent.

Arie Versluis: *"We have now modernized almost the entire sales and planning process, and up next is fulfillment and invoicing. In the coming years, we will develop functionality for other departments and ultimately phase out the entire existing ERP package. We want to continuously improve our organization and work with one single source of truth, in which we capture data once at the start of the process and subsequently reuse it. This eliminates a lot of manual and error-prone administrative work, allows us to automate more and more processes and shorten turnaround times. Plus, our staff is left with more time for activities that add value. This truly is a long-term project, and it's meant to be. It is all about making sure that everything we do is sustainable. We want to be flexible for the future, keep expertise in house, and have the whole organization involved."*

Plans for the future

In time, Versluis aims to use the software to collaborate more effectively with their ecosystem partners and customers using portals. He also plans to open up the platform to more and more mobile users, including ship captains and other personnel in the logistics chain: "Using Low Code enables us to automate more and more of our activities, make unnecessary human interactions a thing of the past, and to become more data-driven through visualization and utilization of data (by making use of the Machine Learning capabilities of the platform, for example). We truly see Thinkwise as the platform that is going to drive innovation for Wagenborg in the coming