



Vopak

E-mergo develops over 50 dashboards for Vopak

In recent years, a close collaboration has developed between tank storage service provider Vopak and data specialist E-mergo, during which E-mergo has developed over 50 Qlik dashboards for Vopak with more planned. As well as building the dashboards, E-mergo also monitors the IT architecture on which they run and implements any Qlik Sense software upgrades and new releases. It has become an indispensable part of Vopak's drive to become a fully data-driven company.

Royal Vopak is the world's largest independent tank storage service provider, specialising in the storage and handling of liquid bulk chemicals, gases and oil products. It also develops infrastructure for products such as hydrogen, sustainable feedstocks, CO2 and flow batteries. With its customers mainly in the chemical and energy industries, Vopak has a worldwide network of tank terminals located strategically for key shipping routes.

Data-driven

Vopak's activities involve and generate a lot of data. So

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Vopak

"That first dashboard acted like a flywheel"

Edwin van Pelt,
*Global IT Service Delivery Manager
Data & Analytics*

Solution Overview

Company name

Vopak

Industry

Transport and storage

Challenges

- Concrete demand for a product for data analysis and data visualization.
- How does analytics software fit into Vopak's IT landscape.

Solution

- Over 50 Qlik Sense dashboards.

Benefits

- Dashboards provide Vopak with various insights.
- A dashboard for every business area
- Technical support and management from E-mergo.

Qlik Sense Partner

E-mergo

www.e-mergo.nl

back in 2016, Edwin van Pelt, Global IT Service Delivery Manager Data & Analytics at Vopak, began exploring the market for a product that could provide the right data analysis and visualisation. Having talked to several companies, E-mergo's Qlik Sense came out of the selection process as the solution best able to address Vopak's needs.

E-mergo's primary challenge was an architectural one: how does analytics software fit into Vopak's IT landscape? Followed by a request to develop a proof of concept (POC) for the first Qlik Sense dashboard. Vopak was very pleased with the result and E-mergo was asked to further develop the POC and put it into production. "That first dashboard acted like a flywheel," recalls Edwin. "Other departments also said they needed more insights. Since when, our collaboration with E-mergo has generated over 50 Qlik Sense dashboards, each providing us with different insights."

A dashboard for every business area

Pam Beemster works as a consultant at E-mergo and is responsible for developing dashboards within the Vopak Data & Analytics team. She first interviews Vopak employees, and then analyses their information needs to determine how a Qlik Sense dashboard can be developed to meet those particular needs. The dashboard is then produced using scrum techniques over a number of 'sprints'.

"I first investigate how best to make that dashboard," explains Pam. "Having been here a number of years now, I've built up considerable knowledge of the business and can think with Vopak about which visualisations might allow people in that department to easily access information that would be useful to them. I either build the dashboard myself or have one of the other Qlik consultants at Vopak do it. I then provide training and have also created various Qlik Sense instructional videos, for example on how to make sheets or do analyses, that are available on all the production dashboards."

One of the first dashboards where Beemster was involved analyses calls, for example when a ship arrives to unload a product at Vopak. The dashboard displays the performance or processing times per modality (sea vessel, barge, truck or rail): the time it takes from when pumping starts until the ship or vehicle departs again; the time a ship is docked; the time taken to pump the product, disconnect the hoses plus any interruptions that may occur during pumping (because obviously any delays to a ship's departure costs money).

Having analysed this data, Vopak can make improvements, for example, to its service to clients or dock-occupancy efficiency. Such dashboard data can also be useful in discussions with clients: for example, over how long inland barges are docked, and whether that performance falls within agreed timeframes or can be improved.

Dashboards for different analytical purposes

Dashboards have been developed for everything from Commercial Management, which supports the sales process and provides insights into available storage capacity to Stock Management, which keeps track of the stock of a customer's product at any given moment, and shows any corrections that have been made to the stock in a tank, as a product's volume can expand or contract as a result of changes in temperature.



Pam recently completed a dashboard for Alarm Management and is currently developing one on water hammer, a phenomenon that occurs when the flow of a liquid in a closed pipe is suddenly blocked, causing a pressure change. “Water hammer can damage a pipeline, and the dashboard keeps track of how quickly the valves in a pipe close,” she explains. “The dashboards we’ve developed around safety performance are also important, looking at what kinds of incidents have occurred at a terminal, and how they can be prevented. We’re also developing a dashboard for Finance. As we’ve become better known across Vopak, so we’re getting requests from every area of the business.”

An eagle eye on the IT environment

As well as developing dashboards, E-mergo also provides technical support for the infrastructure on which Qlik Sense runs and the installation of new releases. “There was a call from various Vopak clients for a Support Manager who could serve as a dedicated point of contact,” explains Calvin Bergkamp, Support Manager since early 2021. “If something is wrong, they knock at my door.”

E-mergo employees often work four days a week for the client and one day on the support desk. “This mix ensures people on the support desk know what’s happening on the ground, while consultants gain valuable knowledge on the support desk for when they’re working with their clients.”

The bulk of the work for the Vopak support desk comes from automated notifications and queries about the Qlik dashboards and servers. If something goes wrong or thresholds are exceeded, an email is

automatically sent to support@e-mergo.nl and a ticket created. “We’re constantly monitoring whether the environment is working as it should,” says Calvin. “If a problem arises, we immediately contact Vopak so we can solve it.”

The support department also carries out any upgrades to Qlik Sense, which gets a new release every few months with new features and bug fixes, as well as conducting monthly ‘sanity checks’. “Every month, after the servers are patched by Vopak IT, we perform a range of checks outside regular work hours to ensure the environment is running as it should be and end-users aren’t experiencing any problems.”

Despite its name, the support desk is not a help desk for Qlik sense end-users at Vopak. “We offer our clients technical and functional support, but at Vopak help desk-type requests from the business are dealt with by the Vopak Data & Analytics team,” explains Calvin. “Vopak chose for this arrangement because the team can use questions and requests from the business as new user stories in order to further develop the dashboards.”

Calvin sends Vopak a monthly report on the services provided by his department: what tickets have been issued on which dashboards and environments. This lets Vopak see which dashboards are causing problems and how many hours E-mergo has spent on them.

Insights into peaks and troughs

The work done by Pam and Calvin is carried out in close consultation with the twelve-strong team of Edwin van Pelt at Vopak. This is made up of data engineers who transform the raw data from the source



systems into useful information; the consultants who do the data modelling; a system architect who introduces new technologies; and the Qlik Sense consultants who develop the data model and dashboard design. “My department collects, models and visualises data using the DAR methodology: Dashboard, Analysis and Reporting,” explains Edwin. “This information provides a variety of useful insights for Vopak employees. For example, the graphical displays allow them to quickly see when an exception occurs from a peak in a graph. They can then zoom straight in, analyse the situation at a granular level and take further action if necessary.”

Edwin is more than happy with the long-term collaboration with the consultants and support staff at E-mergo. “It goes beyond the Qlik Sense tool. They also provide great professional and analytical support to the business. They ask users the right questions to find a solution. My experience with them has been excellent. These are consultants who provide really great support to the user organisation. The account management is also good: we discuss things regularly and have a good mutually accessible relationship. E-mergo isn’t a company that just rents people out; it also provides really good service.”

Focus on complex issues

Nevertheless, Edwin would like to see changes to how the collaboration works in the future. “I’d prefer it if users within the company also created their own visualisations with Qlik Sense. We want to become a data-driven organisation. And that means having to train your users to do this. As a result, the role of my team will also change. We hired E-mergo because there was no Qlik Sense

knowledge available within our company. Now that there is, we’d like to use E-mergo differently, supporting the organisation where necessary in solving more complex issues.”

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Pam Beemster,
BI-consultant at E-mergo

About E-mergo

The name E-mergo is derived from the Latin proverb 'Luctor et emergo' (I struggle and emerge). In Zeeland this signifies winning the battle against water. Obviously, we do not battle water, but we do make sure that companies keep their heads above water in the growing stream of data. Working from the motto 'Manage your data, innovate your business' we help you to get the most out of your data.

We do this using software from Qlik, Microsoft, Mendix and TimeXtender, for which we provide software, consultancy and support. Together we will help your company to create new business models and to reduce costs.

www.e-mergo.nl

The logo for E-mergo, featuring the word "emergo" in a bold, teal, lowercase sans-serif font. The letter 'e' is stylized with a small loop at the top.

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