



ABOUT THE COMPANY

Citrique Belge is a Belgian biotech company and one of the biggest producers of citric acid. The company produces about 100,000 tonnes of citric acid per year.

The citric acid produced is used as a flavour enhancer in soft drinks, fruit juices, sweets, preserves and gelatine products. It also serves as an antioxidant in prepared meat products and canned fruit and vegetables. It is additionally used as the binding agent in soft detergents and bonds with the heavy metals in foodstuffs, as well as many more commercial applications.



HIGHLIGHTS

- ➔ Ready4 Advanced Scheduling (R4AS) provides a centralised tool for operational planners at biotech firm to run maintenance activities and manage resources
- ➔ Maintenance efficiency has greatly improved and communications between planners and engineers is much easier
- ➔ Production down time is better managed as R4AS links with the HR system.

GLOBAL CITRIC ACID PRODUCER ACHIEVES EFFICIENT MAINTENANCE PLANNING PROCESS WITH **READY4 ADVANCED SCHEDULING**

CHALLENGE

In a highly competitive global market Citrique Belge's workforce operates to supply customers with citric acid and related co-products, all according to order and schedule. This means the large production plant needs to provide a safe and continual working environment, operating at high capacity, so preventive and curative maintenance of the machinery components is a top priority.

But the maintenance planning process had become increasingly inefficient with work orders being handled outside the SAP system via Excel spreadsheets. This was resulting in data inconsistencies around both the times and dates of routine maintenance and engineer resourcing allocation.

"We work in a hazardous environment, surrounded by dangerous machinery and materials. Before carrying out maintenance, certain controls must take place and timings need to be very precise to minimise the impact on production. Without accurate maintenance planning schedules, it was very difficult to achieve this efficiently," comments Michel Bangels, IT Director, Citrique Belge.

SOLUTION

Citrique Belge selected the Ready4 Advanced Scheduling (R4AS) solution from SOA People. This would provide a centralised tool for its operational planners to run maintenance activities and manage resources.

"We were already familiar with SOA People having been a customer on other SAP related projects," says Michel Bangels.

Preventive and curative maintenance is carried out on some 10,000 functional inter-connected locations across the large production plant and with R4AS maintenance efficiency has greatly improved. Before it was planned on a weekly basis using Excel spreadsheets which quickly became out of date, but now it is managed at a daily level and the communications between planners and engineers is much easier.

The R4AS solution is linked with the firm's HR system enabling the planners to view exactly which engineers are available at any given time. This ensures that down time is better managed to ensure minimal impact on production.

"R4AS has opened up a lot of new opportunities enabling us to plan our maintenance in an organised and flexible way with more accurate information. We have the confidence to know that the data we are working with is always accurate and up to date, coming from one source so we get one version of the truth," says Michel Bangels.

"If the project was simple then I would have been out of a job. We needed clever people to find the right maintenance solution for our business, and SOA People have very good engineers who really know what they're talking about."

BENEFITS

- The two planners and 30 engineers at the production site share live information on the user-friendly graphical interface to optimise maintenance planning
- Citrique Belge knows when a piece of maintenance work is going to take place and who has been allocated to carry out the work
- Production down-time is better managed ensuring there is minimal disruption to core business
- Maintenance efficiency overall has improved.

WORKING WITH SOA PEOPLE

"If the project was simple then I would have been out of a job. We needed clever people to find the right maintenance solution for our business, and SOA People have very good engineers who really know what they're talking about. They understood the important role of maintenance at our plant and what we were trying to achieve and translated that into a solution for us."

"If I didn't like the people I was working with then SOA People wouldn't be used as a partner."

Michel Bangels, IT Director, Citrique Belge.

