Aktion Helps Mead & Hunt Create IT Crown Jewel

About Mead & Hunt

Daniel W. Mead, an internationally recognized expert in hydroelectric and hydraulic engineering, probably couldn't have imagined that the consulting firm he established in 1900 would become a national firm of impressive stature. Not to mention information technology that would support Mead & Hunt's explosive growth since 1995—from 100 employees in two Wisconsin offices to nearly 900 employees in 30+ offices nationwide. ENR ranks the firm as one of the top 150 consulting firms in the country, and CE News has named it among the top 25 best civil engineering firms to work for in the country.

According to Mead & Hunt Vision System Administrator Dixie Lyght, no discussion about managing the firm's profitable growth is complete without crediting Deltek Vision and Aktion Associates for helping the firm create its IT crown jewel—a well-planned web of custom information centers and integrated data that provide decision-makers the information they need in a click or two.

"In addition to integrating Vision with EleVia and other software, Aktion consultants helped create a number of integrated custom info centers, processes, and reporting templates that have streamlined workflows and improved our ability to make effective business decisions," she adds. "In the finance area alone, project templates have accelerated onboarding companies we've acquired to our invoicing process."

SOLUTIONS PROVIDED

Office Information Center

The office info center contains location, spatial, assigned personnel, and cost information in addition to business registration data.

"You can imagine how the office info center helps us plan future office space needs, but it was indispensable for transitioning employees from their COVID-based remote work environments back to our offices," Lyght explains. "With pre-COVID head count, square-footage and cubicle/office arrangement data, we were able to quickly analyze and plan space/employee utilization for safe distancing.

Fleet Management/Equipment Information Center

The fleet management info center tracks vehicle usage and assigns mileage to specific projects in Vision.

"We've replaced passing a standalone Excel document around, which typically resulted in missing information and incorrect project numbers," Lyght says. "Now employees simply enter mileage and project in the info center. The center also prompts mileage entry at the beginning of each month, which supports accurate reporting."

Aktion and the Mead & Hunt team created an inspection form in the fleet management info center. Employees use this form to track the condition of the vehicle. A driver who fills out the inspection form can notify the fleet coordinator and safety manager if there is an issue that needs attention. The employee info center contains the equipment contents of each vehicle (survey equipment such as drones, stakes, etc.) and is identified on the vehicle in the fleet management info center. This gives Mead & Hunt a one-stop shop to view the mileage, equipment, and inspection form all in the fleet management info center. The employee info center data also is valuable for shuffling equipment to the nearest office where needed.

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>
> ***Dixie Lyght, Vision System Administrator***
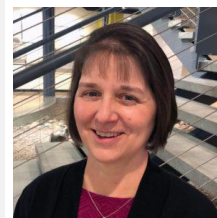
Report Management Information Center

In preparation for Vantagepoint, the firm is in the process of analyzing their plethora of reports to identify reports that may need to be manually changed for the upgrade. The newly created report management info center catalogs the report as either part of Vision or employee-created or custom-created by Aktion. Those created by an employee details the creator, security roles with access to it, and the last time it was used.

"If a report hasn't been used in the last two months, it's probably not needed," Lyght says. "However, before retiring an unused report, we verify our determination with the employee who created it."

Employee/Project Information Center

Each information center is connected with the employee info center and contains procedures for nightly synchronization and automated emails. Aktion developed a procedure to notify managers that have not approved their outstanding timesheets or expense reports.

Within Vision's project info center, a sub-consultant grid tracks each vendor for each project. For instance, on the vendor info center the insurance grid assigns insurance coverage to each vendor and is then linked to the project sub-consultant grid, so we can determine if we have the right insurance coverage for vendors involved in a project.

Biz Dev/CRM Support

Knowledge Manager Pat Peyton, who's responsible for the business development/CRM side of the database concurs and adds, "It's all about Vision as our one source of truth that holds employee, client, project and project pursuit, finance, and sales and marketing information like client feedback surveys, master contract details, and more."

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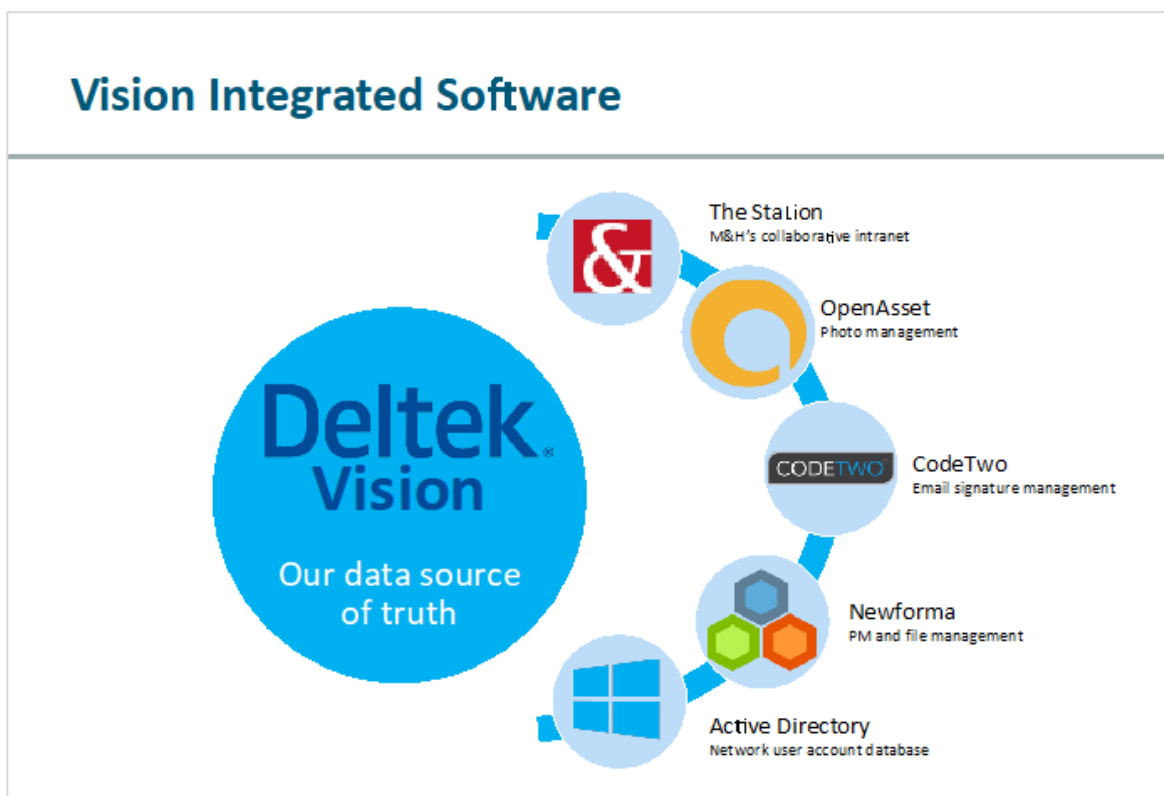
Master Contracts Information Center

The recently created master contracts info center tracks all client and sub-consultant master contracts, which projects used the contracts, the revenue used and what's remaining, and the service work order numbers used per project. It also alerts stakeholders of upcoming key dates, such as expiration, renewal and rate increase. "Aktion was instrumental in creating automation and programing the connection of this new info center to every other info center it touches—projects, companies, vendors, and opportunities," says Peyton. "Now anyone in the company can find and track their master contract information and manage how those contracts are used. What used to be disparate tracking across multiple offices, is now in a unified process that greatly improves workflow and reduces overruns and mistakes."

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Pat Peyton, Knowledge Manager

The diagram below depicts how Vision interacts with the major areas of Mead & Hunt's integrated intranet, marketing, and project management systems.

Vision Integrated Software

The Station — M&H's collaborative intranet

OpenAsset — Photo management

CodeTwo — Email signature management

Newforma — PM and file management

Active Directory — Network user account database

Deltek Vision — Our data source of truth

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- The Station (KA Synthesis software) is the firm's collaborative intranet where employees share ideas and knowledge, ask questions, and communicate with each other. It houses corporate and operational information and searchable directories, employee profiles, project details and more, all populated through Vision integration. The Station also synthesizes Vision data into comprehensive profiles, project teams and project photos from OpenAsset, and links to network files and Newforma projects. This amalgamation creates a project story as well as a place to find similar projects, people who have worked on a project, who might know a client, etc.

- OpenAsset digital asset management software manages marketing photography, graphics, and other digital assets. It is populated with Vision project data that includes the project story, costs, dates, and any number of project details you'd find on a project write up.

- Exclaimer (CodeTwo software) standardizes email signatures and adheres to the firm's brand.

- Newforma project management software pulls from Vision to create project files on the network drive and provides access to project files, emails, searching, and transmittals.

- Active Directory (Microsoft Network Management) houses all network user (employee) data pulled from Vision.

Lyght best summarizes the firm's intricate web of data that Aktion helped weave around Vision. "It's really a beautiful thing."

For more information

To learn more about how Aktion experts can help you build data teamwork that streamlines processes and drives effective business decisions, please contact Aktion or your Aktion Sales Representative.

For additional details about Aktion's Professional Services and our application and industry expertise, visit: https://www.aktion.com/business-it-services/

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