

*VisionWaves helps Achmea to translate strategy into realistic business processes*

## **Abiding by the Rules**

The insurance world is sailing through rough waters. Changing laws and regulations, stricter government control and more demanding clients force insurers to carefully reconsider their company's strategy to adapt to new age demands. Achmea was no exception. Their Company Pension Funds sector (OPF Tilburg) faced increasingly serious issues and was finally determined to take a fresh look at their organization and processes.

This fresh look made several bottlenecks within the organization apparent. The OPF sector proved not only to work with dated systems, but also with outdated production processes. The company had not adapted to new laws and regulations. Moreover, the insurer lacked a SAS70-certification, a method of quality measurement developed by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA). A SAS70-certification proves that a company abides by the latest laws and regulations, that it is a compliant. It is a quality guarantee for both company and client.

The OPF sector wanted to change from a responsive, activity driven organization, to a result-focused and customer-friendly organization, anticipating all demands of both clients and government. To grasp the nettle, they called upon VisionWaves, the strategy-implementation firm from Zeist, specialized in streamlining complex processes and business environments.

“The company needed new spectacles to look at the organization”, said Jan Blonk, operations manager at Achmea. “You cannot do that by yourself, so we asked for the help of a consultancy firm. The expertise and lucid focus of VisionWaves made them stand out clearly.”



Jan Blonk, operations manager Achmea

## **The Approach**

VisionWaves started the project by mapping the Achmea organization. The goal was two-folded: to make the company compliant with the latest laws and regulations, and to acquire a SAS70-certification. Furthermore, the integration of the strategy and processes and the daily execution needed improvement on all levels of the organization. It proved quite a job.

It became clear that Achmea faced a strategy leak. In other words: the existence a fair discrepancy between the – theoretical – company strategy, and the execution in practice. Essential information was lacking, which made clear (re)directing of the company a difficult task.

In cooperation with VisionWaves, Achmea developed so-called Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Based on these, the missing information was surfaced and saved in VisionWaves Delta. This software application, developed by VisionWaves, now functions as the backbone of all available and required information. All existing Achmea systems are connected to VisionWaves Delta. This way, the status of any given process within the company can be checked at any time. Another advantage is that each employee draws information from this same system. This provides an unambiguous information flow for everybody within the firm. Efficiency and effectiveness hence increased considerably. The system is flexibly designed, so that adaptations can be made rapidly.

### **Clear Results**

“VisionWaves has a clear and thorough approach. They produce their deliverables within pre-approved deadlines and budget. Often even faster than indicated in advance. They are nice people to work with. They do not only offer expertise advice, but really think from Achmea's perspective, without being pedantic. A relieve”, said Blonk. “VisionWaves creates trust and remains critical throughout the process. They really held up a mirror to us. That is not always pleasant, but it is very useful. We now save a lot of time and money, and offer better quality and service to our clients than before. That is pure profit.”

Thanks to all implemented improvements, Achmea gained the SAS70-certification. The OPF sector is now fully compliant with all laws and regulations. VisionWaves also had a distinct role in this process. “The VisionWaves consultants are well able to see the coherence between the different criteria for SAS70”, said Blonk. “They stay focused on the end result throughout the process, which made them useful guides.”

### **Unique Methodology**

VisionWaves works from its own methodology: Strategic Value Chain Management. The Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle (PDCA-cycle) lies at the core of this method. All steps are made explicit and the establishment of control mechanisms allows the management to respond faster to potential problems.

The tight planning and thorough approach were not always easy for Achmea. “At first instance, we had a Big Brother-feeling. All gaps were made visible and it was quite a job to tick all the empty boxes. Our data were not nuanced and differentiated enough”, Blonk admits. “All information is now

clearly structured and comprehensible. This creates vast amounts of breathing space. We now have a pure basis from which we can direct the company, since all information is retrievable from VisionWaves Delta.”

Blonk has a positive outlook on the future. “It is such a success that we also want to implement the VisionWaves methodology in other sectors.”

*VisionWaves offers a complete combination of consultancy, innovative software and training, based on her comprehensive Strategic Value Chain Management method.*

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