

Mining sector has to formalise processes, systems to improve productivity

The days of industry and technological knowledge retention by an individual, or group of individuals, particularly in the mining sector have passed, and a shift to a more formalised view of business operations, strategies and measurement of business drivers is essential to maintain growth and operational optimisation.

A key player in this extremely niche market of strategic consolidation, with a wealth of mining experience behind them is Tomahee, based in Pretoria, Gauteng. The company not only has major mining sector experience but offers a “cross operation” consulting service that truly supports the company’s business drivers.

Tomahee MD **Wally Richards** says, “The mining industry has, generally speaking, remained informal in terms of business solutions, operational reporting across processes, and the area of knowledge retention. A key factor towards process optimisation is the need to formalise the operational ‘way of work’ of the business. The need for this within the mining industry is magnified by the trend in the industry where the changing of ownership of mining operations is the order of the day. As a result of differing mining cultures and operational practices inherited by the company, reporting and measuring of operational key performance indicators has become a challenge in terms of using a universal ‘yardstick’.

“With our expertise in the mining sector, I believe that Tomahee offers a niche consultancy service that will enable our clients to address aspects such as standardisation and formalisation in a structured and systematic approach. Our objective is to provide a consultancy solution that ensures complete process optimisation throughout the company at a corporate as well as at an operational level of the business.”

Formalising the operational reporting level ensures that the responsibility of data integrity and validation is distributed to the process owner while simultaneously creating a secure and centrally controlled repository where key indicators are defined, such as productivity, efficiency, availability etc.

Tomahee offers services in three areas of expertise:

■ *Consulting on process flow optimisation:* based on our experience in the mining sector, and best-practice blueprints, we consult in tailoring



WALLY RICHARDS

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current operational process flows against a maturity growth strategy that we develop with our clients.

■ *Consulting on business systems:* a comprehensive understanding of the information technology landscape within the mining industry and our unique approach forms the basis of this service offering. We assist our clients from defining their business need through to evaluating, selecting, configuring and eventual roll-out of business solutions against specific business needs. Our understanding of systems integration against a given IT architect allows us to guide our clients with respect to the distribution of information at an operational level of the business.

■ *Supporting services:* Our supporting service dovetails well with our consultancy to provide a full turnkey solution to our clients. To this end we provide specific project and programme management services during a system implementation or best practice roll-out.

Richards continues, “A variety of external and internal factors influence business at the operational level calling for quick response and reporting, against what may be a new set of key indicators. Today, process owners need to set their processes to optimally support the busi-

ness objectives allowing no room for business solutions that are inflexible in the distribution of business information. The key to optimisation within the mining industry is a) business solutions that are easily configured to support and report against the business drivers, and b) process flows implemented against best practices transparent within the organisation ensuring true knowledge retention.

Tomahee constantly strives to be at the forefront of the industry with respect to its consulting service into the mining industry and their library of local and international best practice consulting solutions is constantly updated to ultimately benefit the clients.

Richards concludes, “The lack of formal and standardised ‘in-time’ operational information across the mining value chain has cost the South African mining sector millions of rand over the years. Decisions based on these key indicators may range from day-to-day operational decision-making to business critical decisions such as the positioning of a new shaft, the impact of which has to be carried over the total life of the asset. In line with the universal driver within the mining industry to reduce the cost a ton of delivering the target production, Tomahee has come a long way in serving its clients in optimising their processes and business solutions. We have an intimate understanding of the core operational needs of the business and our project teams have a track record of ‘resonating’ well with the client. Tomahee prides itself in offering professional consulting and implementation strategies against expected business benefits – and we have the expertise and manpower to back it up”.



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