

Great Dane streamlines order lifecycle management with Flowable



Great Dane

With a history dating back to 1900, Great Dane has established itself as a transportation solutions leader within the field of durable and high-quality trailers and truck bodies.

Headquartered in Chicago, Illinois, Great Dane has manufacturing plants strategically located throughout the United States. The company's network of corporate-owned branches and independent dealers offers a broad range of distribution points for new and used trailers as well as aftermarket services across North and South America.

Challenge – agility in enterprise resource planning

With a supply chain that includes thousands of individual components, Great Dane must manage a great deal of complexity to successfully deliver thousands of finished trucks trailers and truck bodies each month. The respective processes with dealers and suppliers lay both inside and outside the company's JD Edwards ERP system, involving manual, time-consuming tasks. With an ongoing transformation towards lean manufacturing, Great Dane needed a solution to better control their services, orchestrate business processes end-to-end and increase agility in development.

From proof of concept to working application within weeks

With these criteria in mind, Great Dane turned to Flowable: The platform combines business process management and case management, therefore offering a great level of flexibility from process to system. Due to the platform's low-code, rule-based approach, Great Dane can customize it to meet their needs out of the box. The system allows the company to add different layers of processes any time without risking breaks to the existing system.

Great Dane and Flowable began their cooperation with an initial proof of concept (PoC) project. The goal was to manage a specific part of the order change process.

Although initially just a PoC, the project delivered such great results that Great Dane decided to expand it – in order to develop a working application that streamlines a complex process, delivering an even faster result with increased accuracy.

“We invest in innovation that runs from the shop floor to the digital systems used in the back office. With Flowable, we have a way to turn our ideas into useable software that provides real value to the business in a leaner and more efficient way – that also matches the vision of the company.

Joey Dyer, Director Enterprise Architecture Great Dane

“The PoC with Flowable showed the platform’s potential to the executive board. It started opening people’s eyes and educating them on a way that a new system could stand on top of these manual processes as well as enforce better processes to help the business,” explains Joey Dyer, Director of Enterprise Architecture at Great Dane.

Increasing transparency in supply chain management

With deeper understanding of Flowable’s capabilities, Great Dane began identifying the greatest pain points that could benefit from digital task management. The communication and data exchange processes between staff, suppliers and dealers needed improvements, and in some cases these tasks included highly bespoke parts for certain orders. Any problem with any part can impact production lines, leading to delays and potential cost overruns. Because dealing with supplier issues was a manually-driven process, supplier issues caused disruption to other orders within its just-in-time process. Extensive data, along with email exchanges and layered approval processes within this chain, had also increased this instability.

To improve this situation, Great Dane has customized Flowable’s solution into an application called Supplier LEAN Alert. Based on Flowable’s business process and case management solution, Supplier LEAN Alert is designed to create a structured and highly automated method of raising parts issues with suppliers. The solution adds transparency and stability to the process, as employees at Great Dane are able to track it across the entire lifecycle of any work order.

The Supplier LEAN Alert system built in Flowable has helped reduce complexity to ensure that any component or supplier related issues are dealt with faster and with less chance of human error. As an example, reporting was a very time-consuming manual task, as after certain events, staff had to put together reports on issues, systems, emails and vendors. By using Flowable, this information is comprised in one form and the staff at Great Dane can get up to the minute metrics on every supplier.



The ideal solution to match a digital vision

Besides the solution’s success regarding the current improvements, it also had a major impact on Great Dane’s strategic thinking for the future, leading to the vision to expand the system further. The new internal LEAN alert will cover not just suppliers but anything happening on the shop floor, with a machine, process or order and anything else that can lead to delay.

This shows that Flowable is greatly accelerating Great Dane’s development processes. Development on the new system using Flowable is progressing rapidly. This is why Joey Dyer points to the flexibility and simplicity of the Flowable platform as a key enabler in Great Dane’s digitization:

“We invest in innovation that runs from the shop floor to the digital systems used in the back office. With Flowable, we have a way to turn our ideas into useable software that provides real value to the business in a leaner and more efficient way – that also matches the vision of the company.”

This was an example where you can really see the power of Flowable in action. We started looking at scope of work in December and the application went into live production by early March. Almost immediately, we started getting positive feedback from staff. ”