

COMPANY



BUSINESS



INDUSTRIES



LOCATION



DEPLOYMENT



WHY M-FILES?



Case Study

Industrial Services Firm Gets Tough on Quality Assurance and Regulatory Compliance with M-Files



Vigor, LLC is a diversified industrial services firm whose core business is building, repairing and modernizing large government and commercial vessels, with additional expertise in manufacturing complex equipment for marine, hydro, nuclear, aerospace and transportation industries. Based in Portland, Oregon, Vigor is comprised of eight subsidiaries and operates 10 dry-docks representing more than 17,000 feet of pier space, and 800,000+ square feet of fabrication and shop space. As the largest shipbuilder in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska, Vigor employs more than 2,300 people and posts revenues upwards of half a billion dollars annually.

In 2014, Vigor merged with Oregon Iron Works, which now operates as the company's Nuclear Products Division serving three key segments: the Department of Defense (DOD), the Department of Energy (DOE) and commercial markets. While a centralized ERP system was implemented across all of the company's business units, each group employed independent strategies and systems to manage their own documentation, contracts and quality assurance processes.

"As our commercial nuclear business took off and began to boom, we faced inefficiencies due to our manual information management systems," recalls Stacy Raben, Nuclear Products Division Manager at Vigor. "Vigor has long been an IT-centric company, and our merger was the perfect opportunity to get serious about streamlining our back office administrative tasks to increase productivity and efficiency."

Responsible for complying with strict industry regulations, Vigor's Nuclear Products Division searched for an information management solution that would not only automate document control across the business unit, but also offer the ability to manage critical workflows and quality assurance processes. After careful evaluation of leading enterprise content management (ECM) systems, Vigor selected M-Files to manage its sensitive customer and product information, and streamline its highly nuanced business procedures.

M-Files®

THEY SAID IT



“We now trust that our data and logs are accurate all of the time, and that we can generate proof that a person received training or signed off on a corrective action—all within M-Files. We don’t have to worry that somebody forgot to scan a document, link it up and put it in the right location so we can find it. With M-Files, that entire workflow is automated, recorded and available.”

Stacy Raben
Nuclear Products Division
Manager
Vigor, LLC

Centralized Management of Nuclear Contracts and Project Documentation

Initially, the primary goals for Vigor’s M-Files deployment was to better classify, organize and search customer contracts and documentation. The Nuclear Division had previously employed a combination of applications such as Primavera Expedition (for document control) and Excel for quality management, but records were not/could not be stored within the systems, and both required multiple steps to properly manage information. With M-Files, Vigor was able to unify its information sources in a controlled system that could link important documents to business processes.

“Now that we’ve implemented M-Files, we are experiencing the benefits of back office efficiencies and reducing the costs associated with processing labor-intensive nuclear paperwork,” said Raben.

Managing Nuclear Quality Assurance Processes

Vigor’s nuclear business unit has earned a global reputation for excellence in complex steel fabrication, mechanical equipment manufacturing and systems integration, and it is committed to providing safe and quality nuclear products to government agencies and commercial markets. In doing so, the company must maintain compliance with industry regulation 10 CFR 50 Appendix B (enforced by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission or NRC) and NQA-1, which is the nuclear quality assurance standard to ensure the safety of products and services within nuclear facilities.

The Nuclear Division maintains three quality manuals, each featuring dozens (hundreds overall) of supporting procedures and instructions. All of this information has been migrated into M-Files and Vigor’s quality management processes for its nuclear division has been streamlined and automated. With features such as access controls, notifications, e-signatures and audit logs, Vigor has been able to track all compliance activities, from corrective actions to employee training, with complete audit trails of all actions available in M-Files.

The business unit maintains a training requirements matrix based on job role and a pre-populated list of all of the documents that new hires must learn when they join the company. With M-Files, assigned training documents are automatically disseminated to new hires and the system tracks all steps in new employee’s training processes. And because all of these activities are recorded in M-Files, a report is readily available in the case of an audit.

Prior to M-Files, the business unit relied on Access and Excel spread sheets to track and manage quality management-related activities, a process that was creating bottlenecks as commercial business scaled, and more importantly, it was vulnerable to human errors.

“Everything we do is in an effort to guarantee the safety and integrity of our nuclear facilities-related projects,” comments Raben “Without the proper tools in place, organizations are simply more vulnerable to mistakes. With M-Files, on the other hand, we know that our training logs are accurate, and we can generate proof of compliance at any time.”

M-Files®

ABOUT M-FILES

M-Files enterprise information management (EIM) solutions eliminate information silos and provide quick and easy access to the right content from any core business system and device. M-Files achieves higher levels of user adoption resulting in faster ROI with a uniquely intuitive approach to EIM that is based on managing information by “what” it is versus “where” it’s stored. With flexible on-premises, cloud and hybrid deployment options, M-Files places the power of EIM in the hands of the business user and reduces demands on IT by enabling those closest to the business need to access and control content based on their requirements. Thousands of organisations in over 100 countries use the M-Files EIM system as a single platform for managing front office and back office business operations, which improves productivity and quality while ensuring compliance with industry regulations and standards, including companies such as SAS, Elekta and NBC Universal. For more information, visit www.m-files.com.



Trusted, Accurate Audit Reporting

Vigor’s Nuclear Products Division is subject to frequent audits by its customers, its customers’ customers, and by the NRC and ASME (American Society of Mechanical Engineers, which audits to the Section III quality standard. It is not uncommon for the business unit to undergo regular monthly audits, and the company conducts self-audits annually on all of its various regulatory and quality processes.

Prior to M-Files, audit reporting was time-consuming, and the data was often either incomplete or inaccurate. Since deploying M-Files, the company now maintains a complete audit trail of all activities and an accurate archive of all data. M-Files has proven to be an extremely powerful tool within the company for audits and maintaining compliant workflows and certifications.

We now trust that our data and logs are accurate all of the time, and that we can generate proof that a person received training or signed off on a corrective action—all within M-Files,” comments Raben. We don’t have to worry that somebody forgot to scan a document, link it up and put it in the right location so we can find it. With M-Files, that entire workflow is automated, recorded and available.”

M-Files has enabled Vigor to eliminate manual processes, automating everything from document and Armed with a greater understanding as to the full power and capabilities of M-Files, Vigor is now looking to refine and further optimize other processes and workflows. This is of particular importance as the business unit prepares to meet commercial business demands. Nuclear is one of Vigor’s fastest growing business units, and the company is expected to be a major player in India’s nuclear power fleet, which involves the building of six new reactors.

Raben predicts that M-Files will be rolled out across other Vigor business units, such as the missile defense program, which needs to comply with stringent AS9100 quality program requirements that are similar to the requirements that the Nuclear Program must meet. “Our division is experiencing fast-paced growth. Having all of our processes streamlined with M-Files has been critical to our success,” Raben concludes.

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