RWE Power Implements WCM for Coal and Gas-Fired Power Plants

RWE Power is currently implementing the Work Clearance Management (WCM) in its division for coal and gas-fired power plants. The 10 sites are also going live with Document Management Service (DMS) at the same time. Five of those sites are implementing Plant Maintenance (PM) as the centralized order management system. A dedicated project B@S has been launched to carry out the implementation. The design and planning phase began in early 2006. The actual implementation work began in the middle of that year and has since been completed in the gas-fired power plants in Dormagen, Lingen, Bochum-Dortmund, Huckingen, and Ludwigshafen, as well in the coal-fired power plants Westfalen, Gersteinwerk, and Ibbenbüren. The project is set to be completed in early 2008 with the final implementation at the waste plant in Essen-Karnap.

A team of RWE Power employees has been responsible for the business side of the project, with team members consisting of a central steering panel, employees from the individual locations, and employees handling interdisciplinary functions. RWE Systems Applications carried out the technical implementation. As the internal service provider for the RWE Group, it is responsible for IT consulting, development, and user support.

Initial situation

The decision to implement the SAP components was taken following a profitability study that covered a variety of possible solutions. The deciding factor proved to be the high degree of integration between the WCM and DMS components and the components PM and MM, which were already in use at RWE. This eliminated the need for costly interfaces.

The components implemented in the B@S project replace several legacy solutions – in WCM, some systems had still been paper-based. Beginning with the basis of SAP R/3 4.6C, several functions from later releases were introduced, such as electronic confirmation of operational steps. This “signature” function is available to employees who have the necessary SAP user authorization and for external contractors, who do not require the special authorization.

Implementation

At all 10 sites, the implementation phase centered around extensive training for RWE r employees, with all employees receiving the specific degree of training that they required for their work. Office workers, for example, took part in one-day courses, while engineers, supervisors, and shift managers, attended courses of up to six days.

Following the training phase, the implementation went live, accompanied by project employees who provided on-site support for another four weeks. This on-site support received excellent reviews from the employees at the RWE Power locations.

The implementation strategy including on-site support results in fairly long project duration. On the other hand, it ensures very good acceptance among location employees and enables a very high degree of quality in the work that is done. It also provides an opportunity to identify improvements and enhance processes in the implementation phase.

Enhancements

Enhancements included safety certificates for earth-moving permits, explosion protection, hot work, occupational safety, and vehicle permits, as well as radiation protection, which were also integrated into WCM.

The electronic signatures are realized in several areas of WCM using user and password queries.

RWE is currently working on integrating a graphical tool to visualize WCDs in schematic system diagrams.