

Renewable Energy Asset Management Platform Automating and Simplifying the Processes for Wind, Solar, Geothermal and Hydro Project Operators



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“PowerHub is all about giving people access to the right information at the right time so that they can make the right decisions.”- Etienne Lecompte

CEOCFO: Mr. Lecompte, how does PowerHub simplify asset management as it indicates on your site?

Mr. Lecompte: We do that through technology and a great team. PowerHub at its core is a set of technology tools that allow people to automate processes, identify and streamline tasks and centralize information. By doing all of that, in essence, we simplify asset management. On top of that, we have a team in place to help setup our system: process mapping, migration of information, system integration to make the migration seamless and easy. We're combining great tools and a great team that is how we have an impact on our customer's business.

CEOCFO: Who is turning to you for services?

Mr. Lecompte: We have a variety of type of organizations that turn to us. Normally the three main types of clients that we deal with are asset owners/developers, the financial community and services providers. By asset, I mean renewable energy assets or renewable energy projects. It can be wind, solar, geothermal or hydro projects. It is the owners of those projects who often also operate or oversee these projects. We also work with the financial community: debt owners or equity owners of projects who like to know what is happening at any given stage during the project. They encourage their portfolio companies to come to us to bring on board their projects on PowerHub to gain additional visibility beyond the traditional monthly or quarterly reports they receive. Another category of users are the service providers, operation maintenance providers or even EPC firms who are looking for tools to either streamline their own operations or to facilitate either due diligence operations or hand of off projects to clients.

CEOCFO: What might you pick up that less sophisticated systems will not be able to find or point out easily to their clients?

Mr. Lecompte: Our biggest competitors out there in the marketplace are Excel and inertia. We are rarely replacing existing systems that are in place, for most of our clients we bring a fresh perspective into their operations. If you look at the energy marketplace, the big difference between renewables and traditional thermal generation is that in a coal fired plant, for example, you have a variety of people that are on site day in and day out that monitor, track performance, report, manage and account for that one project. That same output of energy is now covered by dozens or hundreds of plants in renewable energy, but it's most of the same work that needs to be done: that takes a lot more coordination and effort. As renewable energy is a fairly new industry, the tool sets have not really followed the speed of deployment of projects. PowerHub allows people to aggregate large volumes of information, digest it and make it actionable. Unfortunately, a lot of the industry currently uses manual processes and tools to manage their plants. We often see an immediate impact when our solution is rolled out because we free up resources to dig deeper into what is needed to optimize plants rather than simply fight fires.

CEOCFO: Do you have a standard set of reports? Do you present raw data? What are you actually presenting to a client and can they choose how the information looks and what they get from you?

Mr. Lecompte: Absolutely. When we started off we had a bunch of template reports, so you'd get a template that you could use and customize a little bit. We have since moved away from that and offer a fully custom reporting suite that users can then further customize and even automate entirely. Reporting is taxing for most organizations so we allow our clients to automate their reporting and access their data in the most relevant way for their use: raw data, daily data, etc. Ultimately once a client has setup their reports the system has the ability to completely run these for them. Some people do that for invoicing as an example. If you had to send an invoice to someone and it was a manual process, you needed to export information, calculate things and so on and we just automate it, period. People go from processing reports that could take them several hours and days to a few seconds.

CEOCFO: How do you reach potential clients?

Mr. Lecompte: Our outreach is done using a variety of mediums. We do outreach through our newsletter, blog and social media where we showcase relevant news and our subject matter expertise. We then do targeted outreach through attendance, sponsorship and exhibition at specific conferences throughout North America and some in Europe. We also often speak on panels that allow us to confer on best practices and practical examples in asset management.

CEOCFO: Are people surprised that it can be handled in such an efficient matter? Are they skeptical?

Mr. Lecompte: People are skeptical, especially when you are talking about automating anything. People often don't know what's possible because either they haven't experienced it first hand or because of the mindset of if it's not broken then don't fix it. When we say sure, your process currently kind of works but it is not really effective or efficient, meaning when you spend a great deal of time doing it and a lot of time doing activities that are fairly low value add. People are skeptical that we can reduce their workload or that we can integrate with a variety of different data sources, ingest the data in a very effective manner and basically deliver results in a useful and actionable format. However, when they see it in action they realize it is a very powerful tool.

CEOCFO: What is involved in implementation and what level of customization might be needed?

Mr. Lecompte: The level of customization really depends on what is required. The out of the box system is very flexible in by design. Ultimately PowerHub can be the system that you need right away or it can be customized to meet all your needs. For each implementation, we work with the client to identify the data they need, the interface they want to have with other systems and then we really dig deep into customization is normally on the reporting side. As I was mentioning, everyone has different reporting requirements. Often there are a lot of similarities that people look at: comparing asset performance to benchmarks; weather adjusted or not but ultimately it's fairly custom work.

Out of the box, we have a lot of flexibility. We have a dedicated team that works with our clients on each implementation and helps them to further customize the software so that it really works for their business processes and their world. We are big believers that software should work for business owners rather than the other way around. Typically, we start the implementation on one project: top to bottom collating, tracking, digesting and reporting on information for one project. That is a very hand in hand process between the client and us. Once that first project is done, it serves as a template for the further roll out of new projects and serves to streamline the process afterwards.

CEOCFO: Would you tell us about being recognized on the CIO Review?

Mr. Lecompte: It was a pleasant surprise to be recognized by CIO Review. We are out there, working very hard and we are trying to make the lives of our clients easier. It is always good to get some additional recognition for the work that we are doing and it shows that it has been having an impact. It is a nice surprise to be acknowledged in the sector and we'll keep working on our platform to gain additional recognition from the marketplace.

CEOCFO: What has changed in your approach over time? What do you understand now about the process, technology and dealing with your customers and potential customers?

Mr. Lecompte: I think the key thing we have learned is flexibility. We realized early on when the first and beta version of PowerHub came out they were really prescriptive. This is how you should do this in the system. It is a sequence of A, B and C. We soon came to realize through beta testing that people might like to start at K and go to A and M and so on. We have learned to move away from linear processes or structured approaches and allow users to have a lot of flexibility in their interaction with the system: and that was very beneficial.

With our 3rd release right around the corner we have taken this concept to new heights ultimately allowing users to fully customize PowerHub to meet their complete organizational needs even beyond Asset Management.

CEOCFO: *Why choose PowerHub?*

Mr. Lecompte: In essence, it is about simplifying your operations. Managing and overseeing is complex as it is. PowerHub allows you to focus on what matters by automating routine tasks and reports, centralizing your information and tying it all together in one cohesive platform. PowerHub is all about giving people access to the right information at the right time so that they can make the right decisions.

