psoda

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DARSHIKA PATEL

Contact Energy

CONTACT ENERGY REALISES CENTRALISED CONSOLIDATION OF PROJECT INFORMATION AND GAINS IMMEDIATE TIME—SAVINGS

CASE STUDY: CONTACT ENERGY

Contact Energy has been in business for over 25 years, owns and operates 11 power stations, and produces 80-85% of its electricity from renewable hydro and geothermal stations. Contact Energy offers Kiwis across New Zealand electricity, gas and broadband services.
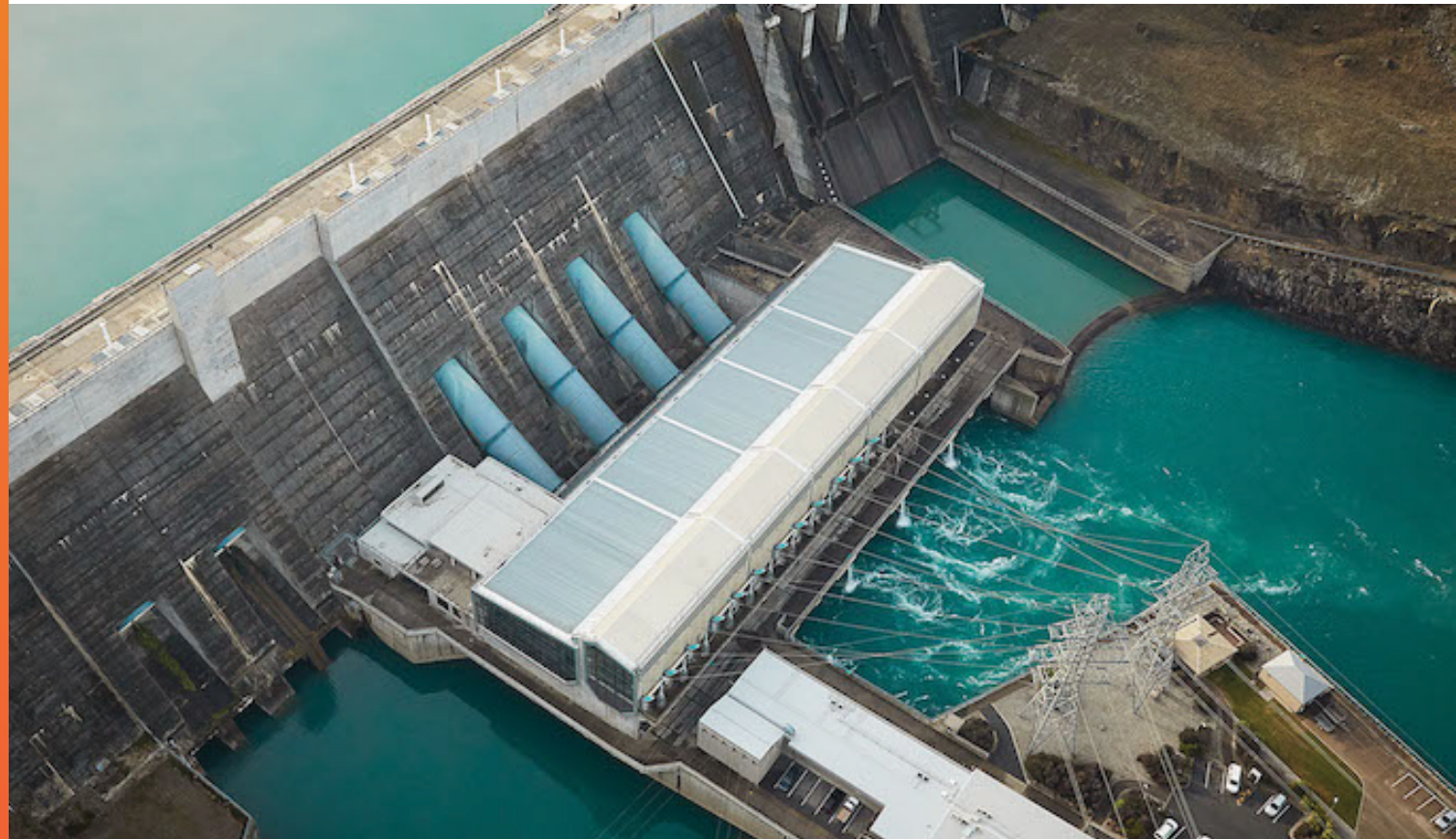
The Clyde Dam on Lake Dunstan is the largest concrete gravity dam in New Zealand.

🏢 INDUSTRY DRIVING CHANGE

The changing face of the energy market and the industry as a whole, requires businesses to adapt and change general practices. Contact Energy undertook a proactive approach to reviewing its existing Capital Investment processes to match the change within the industry and exemplify best business practice.

Contact Energy reviewed its capital investment process taking into consideration the decision-making and governance processes; who the key decision makers were for funding and how well due process was being followed. The review took in feedback from across the business as the separate divisions within the business operate quite differently with divergent projects, processes and funding requirements.

🥧 REPORTING ON BUSINESS INSIGHTS NEEDED BETTER DATA

Following the review, Contact Energy realised the tools they were using were no longer meeting the business needs. The business was getting basic information from incomplete and often out-of-date data. Further insights for decision making were required to deliver best value to the business.

Darshika Patel is a Senior Corporate Finance Analyst, responsible for business strategy and risk assessment of projects as well as integrating improvements in the business and evaluating efficiency opportunities. "Our business process was working, but not as efficiently as it could be. Collating information from project managers was very manual

CHALLENGES:

Tools were no longer meeting the **business needs**

Getting information from **incomplete** and **out-of-date** data

No **consistent way of reporting** on the projects

Collating information from managers was **time-consuming**

SOLUTIONS:

Psoda's **functionality** and **flexibility** gives the ability to grow as the business does

Psoda is a **single repository** for all project data

Psoda's **scheduled reporting** makes it easy to run reports consistently

Psoda makes it **quick and easy** to update or upload information

and time-consuming. We gained few insights from the information we did get which was impacting the decision-making processes. Additionally, we had no consistent way of reporting on the projects [across the organisation] and we couldn't roll insightful information up to the highest level to see everything in totality. We needed a pipeline view of our large projects to identify any issues and risks arising and then manage them accordingly. The other element missing was a dashboard which could be customised to give us the insights and information we needed" – Darshika Patel

⚲ FINDING PSODA

Contact Energy looked at available solutions on the market. They issued an RFP to a number of companies including Psoda - who had also been suggested as a potential partner by Independent Quality Assurance New Zealand during a recent audit. Each potential partner gave Contact Energy a solution demonstration and was evaluated on how easy and intuitive the tool was to use, how customisable the software was, functionality such as risks, issues, lessons learned register, complex reporting for strategic goal alignment, integration with their financial systems, status updates and benefits tracking across the business. IT security and access control were also key as the business operates with commercially sensitive projects, contracts and data.

The Contact Energy team carried out detailed evaluations, held internal workshops to assess and refine the requirements and also looked at how they were currently working without the tool so they could really see where a new solution would add value and deliver the outcomes they needed. It was important that their processes dictated how they used the tool – and not the other way around.

Finally, following a further demonstration to a wider business team, Contact Energy selected Psoda as its chosen provider. This was based on a number of factors including:

- high levels of solution functionality and flexibility, giving the ability to grow as the business did
- ability to configure the software to operate it the way the business needed to now and in the future
- price point/affordability
- ease of use for users who don't all carry a project manager title
- ability to easily manage over 200 projects at all levels of maturity
- software that was intuitive for users to minimise change management risks
- quick and easy to update and upload information - tool would only be as good as the inputs

 "Psoda ticked all the boxes for the solution itself, plus their training and support services were excellent. We felt we'd be well supported through the implementation and onwards. We got on well with the team, they understood our requirements and were able to deliver everything we needed" – Darshika Patel

❝ Psoda **ticked all the boxes** for the solution itself, plus their **training and support services were excellent.** We felt we'd be **well supported** through the implementation and onwards.

DARSHIKA PATEL

Once Psoda had been selected, the implementation plan was kicked-off with a phased approach.

Phase one involved rolling out the basics and managing the set-up and configuration of fields and workflows. Contact Energy was keen to start using the solution with real data as soon as possible and stop the manual input of data and information. Once the fundamentals were in place, phase two was implemented which involved automating the financials and actuals uploading, adding features around business case templates, workflows for change requests and endorsements as well as different levels of governance. Following on from phase one and two, all projects were now transferred and set up in the Psoda solution. The functionality to view all projects was enabled, allowing visibility and tracking at a portfolio level and at a company-wide level. Programme reporting was included as part of phase two.

Project checks were carried out regularly by the Psoda team to ensure the work was progressing as planned and the teams at Contact Energy were comfortable using the software and could see the benefits. A programme of continuous improvement was put in place as project managers worked with the software and needed it configured to follow specific processes – functionality that Psoda handles easily!

⚗ TESTING BEFORE USING

Psoda set-up a test environment for Contact Energy to use – so project managers could use the tool and create dummy projects to see how the software worked. It was well received by users and gave them confidence in the tool, they could also experiment and try things without compromising real projects and data. Weekly sessions were held for users to give feedback and ask questions. Feedback was passed to the Psoda team who responded to user questions quickly to implement user requests, delivering a solution that worked the way the business wanted and needed.

⚇ IMPLEMENTATION AND TRAINING

The implementation was executed well to provide a successful outcome. Contact Energy has over 200 users who have since been using the solution in varying levels – some only inputting data once a month, others using it on a daily basis. Training is usually carried out in person, but with Covid restrictions in place, training was moved to an online model. This worked well as most users had two screens so they could see what to do on one and practise themselves on the other screen. This built great levels of confidence around using the software. Feedback confirmed users were happy and found the software easy to use and flexible.

Much of the implementation and training success was down to the quick responses from Psoda to configure the software as the users tested and trialled. "The Psoda team has been amazing, accommodating any integrations and user requests right through the process – it's been really good and their support is just incredible" – Darshika Patel

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Contact Energy

⬦ REALISING BENEFITS

Contact Energy is using the Psoda solution with senior leadership – it has highlighted a lot of business insights quickly, in more detail and much better than the previous solution. The tool holds a lot of information which can be cut in many ways to give relevant insights to users. The leadership team can see projects pipelines, how much was approved for expenditure over the course of the year, links into the strategic alignment and goals of the business and the realised benefits that would be delivered. "It was a new way of looking at our business data, giving us a single source of the truth" says Darshika. "We've got consolidated information coming through which streamlines our decision making process. The dashboard is so useful – the fact that it can be updated in real time means amends to data can be done just 10 minutes before a meeting and we can talk to it knowing it's up-to-date. Previously, all data would have been a week out of date because we were required to use a manual approach".

 "The solution will only ever be as good as its inputs, so we've done careful training and education around that. Our project managers and portfolio secretaries put good data in so we get good data out which has a roll-on effect in portfolio discussions and the ability for key governance committees to make informed decisions which in turn, deliver better outcomes for the business and for our customers".

Prior to using Psoda, collating data and specs for just one committee report could take up to half a day, it now takes just minutes. With up to seven committees in the business, the time savings are tangible and real. Reporting is quick and done from the centralised dashboard so even more time is saved in collating information.

Psoda's out of the box
Capex vs Opex dashlet
used by Contact Energy

Capex vs Opex

Not actual data

Legend: Opex Total Budget ■ Capex Total Budget ■ Opex Actuals ■ Capex Actuals ■
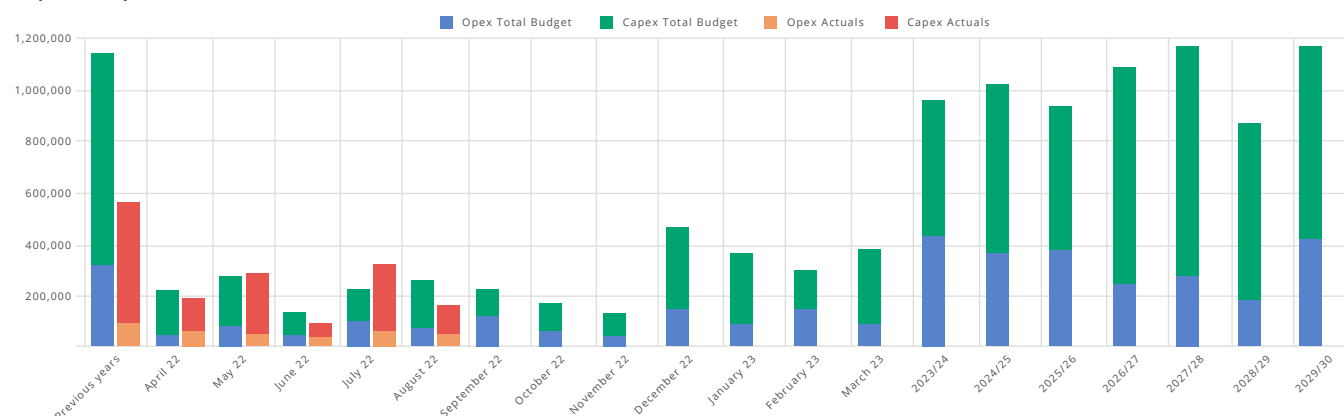
⚲ WORKING WITH PSODA

"Working with Psoda – both the software and team – has been so good. The software is incredibly flexible so we really can work the way we want to [not as dictated by a solution]. The functionality is phenomenal and gives us everything we need now but will also grow with us as our business changes and matures. We can see on a daily basis the benefits gained.

Support from Psoda is just next level – I don't think we've ever experienced support like this before. We can message Psoda and get an immediate response and resolution – no more waiting for a day to get things resolved, they are right at our fingertips. With Psoda you get great software, amazing support and nice people to do business with".

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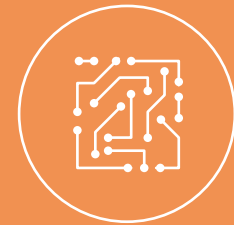
♪psoda

FLEXIBLE AND
CONFIGURABLE

RESPONSIVE
SUPPORT

PERSONALISED
ONBOARDING

LATEST
TECHNOLOGY

VISIT: **WWW.PSODA.COM**