

Interview with Ed Deutz and Carl Eikenboom

Subject

"Mobile EX Lamps at Night"

Teaching

Seeking solutions outside of
Shell



It can be so Simple

JULIAN LAMBERMON

Whenever factories are faced with having to make fast repairs, speed and accuracy are paramount, at the expense of the safety of the factory and those working there. The requirements for this include well lit surroundings. It didn't take long for Ed Deutz, technical assistant for E&I at RWH to realise that certain pumps were set up in such a way that the standard lighting in the plant did not provide enough light. When the mobile lighting was also insufficient, he looked for another solution - and found one.

"Well, this was typically one of those things you were constantly running up against", according to Deutz. "When we had an urgent repair on site, it often seemed that we needed lighting, particularly in the winter. There is not enough lighting in the plant, particularly in places that are difficult to reach. When we were sent in there, we had to bring everything with us."

The lamps were regularly hired in. "With an urgent repair, when you have to be quick off the mark, that really delayed things. Then you also found out that there isn't 220 (Volt, ed.) available everywhere in the plant, so you have to pack extra extension leads with long cables that present an extra trip hazard", summarises Deutz. "All this cost more, and too more time and effort."

"Young people: take a fresh perspective to share good, simple idea!"

After some time, we reached the point that you no longer wanted to be dependent on that, and wanted to start looking for something else. "I was looking for alternatives, and found lamps that were battery-powered. They are EX certified, IP66 water and dust-proof and particularly suited to zones two, one and zero. You charge them in a station and can take them and use them directly. We no longer hire them, but have bought them", Deutz explained, smiling about the lamps that he had took time to look for. "It is actually quite simple. Isn't it awesome?"

Deutz was not the only one that was immediately enthusiastic about the solution. "Actually, I didn't have any resistance to it when launching this plan. How come? Well..." There was a short silence. "Actually, I just wasn't standing still. It is more about interpreting the experience of others. This was such a general bugbear with everyone, that virtually all my colleagues recognised this problem. That is the core of a successful solution: everyone had to put up with the problem at some time or the other."

“A good solution can be very simple.”

Carl Eikenboom, sponsor from Handvat, approved this. “Lighting is generally the last thing you think about where people are preparing for their work. This can certainly be a problem when it is already really dark around half past five. Everyone now has a light with them that they can – click! – turn on straight away. I had been looking for something like that for years,” he beamed.

Deutz encouraged his colleagues to keep looking for solutions to all kinds of problems they experienced. “At a given moment, people may think ‘that is difficult, but it’s normally how things are. That’s how we’ve been working for some time at Shell.’ That is something we particularly cannot do. The organisation may be very big, but if you want something, you can get it for each other, that’s what I’ve learnt. Handvat encourages us, and helps us to save money. So you also get the resources to work on a good idea.”

For his young colleagues, Deutz sees an important role. “There is always something – in whatever field that may be – that can be done better. Particularly the young ones who have just arrived with a fresh perspective, free from blinkered corporate thinking. They have to keep their eyes open and their ears sharp. You have an important role in improving the way in which we work at Shell Pernis.”

