

ACCRUENT MERIDIAN

How Firstgas Created a Single Source of Truth for 220,000 Engineering Documents with Accruent Meridian

Learn how Firstgas manages thousands of engineering documents across six vaults, improving access to critical records while maintaining document quality and governance with Accruent Meridian.

220K
Engineering Documents

6
Meridian Vaults

20+
Years of Engineering Drawing History Preserved

Firstgas operates high-pressure natural gas transmission pipelines and distribution networks across New Zealand. The company is part of Clarus Group, an energy group whose businesses also include gas storage, renewable energy and LPG distribution. These operations require engineering information to be shared among employees, contractors and consultants working throughout the country.

The organization's document management practices have evolved over several years. What began as a single drawing vault has expanded into a centralized engineering information repository that includes data sheets, operating manuals, certificates, statutory documents and other asset-related records.

The Challenge

As Firstgas operations expanded across New Zealand, ensuring employees, contractors and consultants had access to current engineering drawings became increasingly important. The organization needed a more efficient way to manage and distribute engineering information than traditional paper- and media-based processes could provide.

As the business grew, the challenge evolved beyond document distribution. Maintaining consistent information across operations and external design teams became

increasingly important. Differences in asset names, document descriptions and drawing numbers made records more difficult to locate. Consultants working on individual projects also needed guidance on existing drawings that required updates.

The organization needed to maintain control over document creation while enabling employees to find information independently. Remote access remained a priority, including the ability for field personnel to access drawings when network connectivity was unavailable.

The Solution

Firstgas uses Accruent Meridian to manage engineering drawings and documents and provide read-only access for employees and external consultants. As part of its ongoing optimization strategy, the organization partnered with Matrix, whose expertise in engineering document management helped guide the evolution of its Meridian environment. Matrix provided configuration support, reporting capabilities and best-practice guidance, helping Firstgas align its processes with standard Meridian functionality while building a scalable foundation for long-term growth.

As the organization expanded across multiple businesses and grew its document environment, it built its approach around three core principles: standardized rules, controlled document management and ongoing quality assurance. As Sharon Marshall, Document Controller at Firstgas, explained, "From our early beginnings, we've had three principles that we've adopted, and these being the consistent rules, in-house control and QA."



“We want to ensure that we are all using the same name, so that within the company you don’t have different teams calling things differently.”

SHARON MARSHALL, DOCUMENT CONTROLLER, FIRSTGAS



“We can work with them to make sure that they’re updating a document that’s already in place that they weren’t aware of rather than creating a new drawing for what they needed.”

SHARON MARSHALL, DOCUMENT CONTROLLER, FIRSTGAS

Standardized Rules for Engineering Information

As Firstgas expanded its use of Meridian, the organization established a common set of rules for managing engineering information. Documents are organized using asset location and document type, with standardized values helping maintain consistency across all six vaults. Asset names are aligned with GIS and maintenance management systems, creating a common language for engineering information across the business.

This approach provides a scalable framework for managing engineering records while helping users locate and work with information more consistently.

Controlled Document Management

With engineering projects frequently involving external consultants, Firstgas designed its document management processes to balance collaboration with governance. The document management team serves as a central coordination point, helping consultants identify existing records, apply standards and work from the correct documents before project work begins.

This approach helps ensure engineering information remains accurate, connected and aligned with the organization’s broader view of its assets.

Ongoing Quality Assurance and Governance

As the use of Meridian evolved from a drawing repository into a broader engineering information platform, Firstgas focused on maintaining confidence in the quality and integrity of its engineering records. Saved collections, custom views and reporting tools help the team identify data inconsistencies, monitor document activity and maintain standards across a growing document environment.

Document logs provide visibility into approvals, revisions and activity history, while automated reporting helps identify publishing issues and documents requiring additional action. Together, these practices support ongoing governance and long-term trust in engineering information.



The Results

Today, Meridian serves as the single source of truth for approximately 220,000 engineering documents across six vaults. What began as a document repository for Firstgas has evolved into a scalable platform that supports multiple businesses while maintaining consistent governance, document quality and access to critical engineering information.



“We have grown Meridian as a single source of truth for the engineering drawings and documents.”

**SHARON MARSHALL, DOCUMENT
CONTROLLER, FIRSTGAS**

A Single Source of Truth for Engineering Documents

Meridian provides a centralized repository for engineering drawings, manuals, certificates, data sheets and other asset-related documents. By applying consistent naming conventions, metadata standards and document controls across all six vaults, this ensures employees, contractors, and consultants can access reliable information from a single system.

Self-Service Access for Employees and Consultants

Publishing documents through Meridian Explorer has transformed how users access engineering information. Employees and consultants can independently locate and view current documents, reducing reliance on designers and document control personnel for routine requests.

This self-service approach improves productivity across the organization while allowing technical specialists to focus on higher-value activities.

Faster Access to Current Information in the Fields

Field personnel no longer rely on document updates distributed on DVDs every six months. Instead, selected key engineering documents are synchronized to local devices whenever users reconnect to the network, providing more timely access to current information even in remote locations.

This approach helps ensure teams are working from the latest available information while maintaining access when network connectivity is unavailable.

Reduced Administrative Effort and Improved Consistency

Automated drawing-number assignment eliminates the need to manually identify available numbers, while prepopulated drawing borders give consultants the information they need at the start of a project. Together, these capabilities reduce administrative effort, improve consistency and support adherence to document standards from the start of each project.



“Being able to go back in time with drawings is fantastic. We were able to use an earlier version of a drawing for a vessel that had been removed from service as the starting point for a reinstatement project rather than starting from scratch.”

SHARON MARSHALL, DOCUMENT CONTROLLER, FIRSTGAS

Better Visibility and Governance

Saved searches, customized views and automated reporting help the team identify missing metadata, publishing errors and approved documents awaiting release. These tools provide greater visibility into document quality and support ongoing governance across a growing document environment.

The organization’s document control processes also help consultants identify and update existing records rather than creating duplicate drawings, improving consistency and reducing rework.

Access to Decades of Engineering Knowledge

Meridian preserves historical document versions, approval records and activity logs, providing valuable context for operational, maintenance and capital projects. The ability to access previous document revisions allows teams to reference historical engineering information and reuse existing work when appropriate.

In one instance, the team used a historical drawing of a vessel that had previously been removed from service as the starting point for a reinstatement project.



“PDF publishing was a game changer for us. Instead of users having to come to me or the designers to find a drawing, they can access documents themselves and use the search tools to quickly find what they need.”

SHARON MARSHALL, DOCUMENT CONTROLLER, FIRSTGAS

Looking Ahead

What began as a single drawing vault has grown into a centralized engineering information platform. With Accruent Meridian and ongoing support from Matrix, the organization is well positioned to continue improving document accessibility, governance and operational efficiency while maintaining long-term control of its engineering information.

By combining standardized processes, strong governance and accessible engineering records, Firstgas has built a foundation that can scale alongside the business while preserving critical engineering knowledge for future generations of employees.