



Case Study – Webuild Integrity Line

» **Digital whistleblowing across borders:**
How Webuild successfully implemented
EQS Integrity Line «

In 2018 Italian-based engineering company Webuild switched their digital whistleblowing system to EQS Integrity Line. This case study explains why a digital whistleblowing system makes sense for a global company, the company's experiences of opening up their whistleblowing system to third parties and what strategy they are using to communicate the system across international markets.

Webuild is a truly global company. The Italian-based engineering company operates in more than 50 countries, employs more than 70,000 people, and aims to ensure the highest compliance standards in every country it operates. This sheer size and international nature of Webuild means that the challenges around implementation of a whistleblowing system are even more complex than normal.

However, in weighing up the options, Webuild decided on a digital whistleblowing system because:

- They operate under many regulatory frameworks and need a system which fulfils all the requirements in the countries they are active in
- Their workforce is extremely diverse and an intuitive online platform operating in many languages means the whistleblowing channel is available to the greatest number of users

- The cost benefit ratio of a digital whistleblowing system is extremely positive.

Even though a whistleblowing system is not mandatory in all of the countries where Webuild operates, the company is in any case strongly committed to integrity and ethics and wanted to use the digital whistleblowing system as a way of communicating with employees. Investing in the best system to protect whistleblowers was a way of showing how much the company cared about these issues.

Webuild adopted a digital whistleblowing system in 2016, however in 2017 complaints that the site was not working properly due to technical reasons meant that it was clear they needed to search for a more reliable service provider.



webuild 

About Webuild:

Webuild (former: Salini Impregilo) is an industrial Group, specialising in the construction of major complex infrastructure projects, a well-established Italian company able to compete with leading international competitors. Operating in 50+ countries with over 70,000 employees and a revenue of €6.4 billion (Consolidated Financial Results 2020), the Group is one of the major global players in the construction sector.

Opening the Webuild Integrity Platform up to third parties

Following an open tender Webuild chose EQS Group as their digital whistleblowing partner. Right from the start Webuild took the difficult decision to make the system public and make it accessible on the company website, not only to employees but also to third parties such as service providers and suppliers.

Managers were initially concerned that the system might be abused. Would it be posted on the internet and used to spread rumors about Webuild staff? In fact, Webuild has not found this to be the case. The company has found that putting the whistleblowing system on the website and opening to suppliers has actually ensured the company has a competitive advantage – their international ESG ratings have improved as a result!

Spreading the word: communicating the Webuild Integrity Platform

When thinking about how to communicate their new digital whistleblowing system, Webuild's Communication department decided on a communications campaign involving intranet news and email alerts to employees. This was less a complete corporate shift, rather more of a revamp of the old system after all. What really helped the communication campaign to fly was the CEO recording a short but effective video explaining that the new digital whistleblowing system was now online, not only open to employees but also to third parties.

Reactions to the new whistleblowing system were mixed. Many of the countries Webuild operates in have a long history of encouraging whistleblowing – the UK, USA and Australia for

example – but other countries lack a whistleblowing culture. Even now, although Webuild is an Italian company, the majority of reports come from outside of Italy.

The compliance team at Webuild has found training and communications key in addressing this challenge. With any new system, persuading stakeholders that they can trust that the company will investigate concerns while keeping information confidential, that the system is robust and there will be no retaliation is difficult enough, but particularly in countries which lack a reporting culture. Webuild has found it necessary to tailor communications to specific markets and they are now trialing different communications and messaging in different regions.

3 Questions to Daria Angelini, Head of Compliance at Webuild

Why did you decide on EQS Integrity Line?

EQS Integrity Line was the technical and economic winner. When it came to the technical abilities of the system, we asked a steering commission made up of internal compliance, technical, HR, CSR, IT professionals to evaluate the tenders and this really provided added value in the selection of the supplier. We wanted to choose the best solution for Webuild.

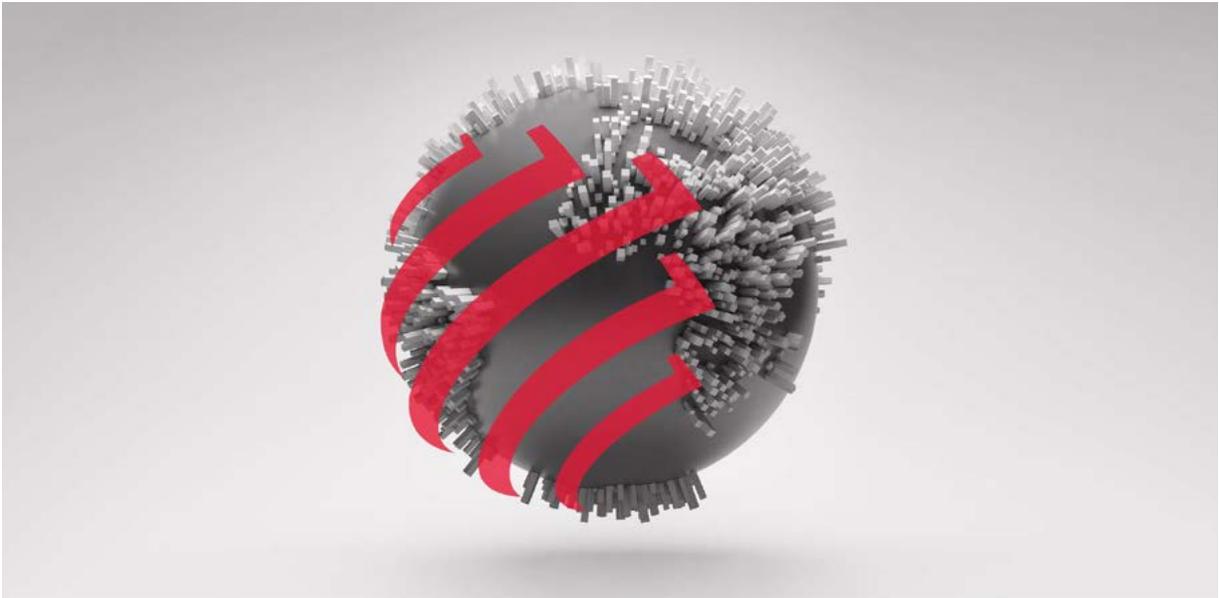
How was EQS Group able to support you during the implementation of the digital whistleblowing system?

The best support was the benchmarking work EQS Group did for us which showed how companies with similar characteristics to us have

implemented their whistleblowing channels. During the project there were so many decisions to make – do we have a simple homepage or one with many pictures, what to put in the FAQs for example – so being able to compare our decisions with other companies really helped a lot.

How does the EQS Integrity Line help your daily compliance work?

Webuild is certified on anti-bribery under ISO 37001:2016 “Anti-bribery management System”. The system allows a full audit trail on all reports coming in from employees and third parties. Everything is archived and GDPR compliant. This is vital in maintaining our high certification.



Daria Angelini
Head of Compliance, Webuild



Webuild



Sector:
construction company



Employees:
70,000



Revenue:
€6.4 billion



Locations: 50+



EBITDA:
€ 820.6 million



Founding year: 2014

Status: 2020



EQS Integrity Line: Digital whistleblowing system



Available in more than
70 languages



Comprehensive case
management



Secure whistleblowing
channel with anonymous
dialogue function



Granular authorization
concept



GDPR compliant and
ISO 27001 certified

Find out more:
www.integrityline.com

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