

## TRENDMINER COMMUNITY

# Customer spotlight: Yves Racette

## Director Technology at Valero Energy

He is our most active member, he reached the highest rank, which reflects his dedication, expertise, and continuous support for others.

As he now steps into retirement, we captured his journey, insights, and experiences in a special interview.

We highly encourage all process experts, both current and future, to read this interview and learn from his mindset and expertise.



### AT A GLANCE

<b>NAME</b>	Yves Racette
<b>ROLE</b>	Director Technology
<b>COMPANY</b>	Valero Energy – San Antonio, Texas headquarters
<b>INDUSTRY</b>	Oil and gas – the largest independent refiner in America

**“TrendMiner helped our SMEs with getting the right information faster, the ability to connect and analyze data from multiple sources, detect and analyze events, filter data outliers.”**

# Let's get to know you

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## Could you introduce yourself?

My name is Yves Racette, I graduated as a Chemical Engineer from Laval University in Quebec City, Canada. I had an unusual career for a Chemical Engineer as I worked in Automation, with Data Historian systems and in software development during my entire career. I am retiring as Director Technology at Valero Energy, a major Oil and Gas Company, at the San Antonio Texas Headquarters where I was responsible for some key applications related to Process Key Performance Indicators (KPI) monitoring, engineering documentation management and analytics with TrendMiner.

## What's your role day to day? What kinds of questions or data do you typically work with?

I typically manage user requests for monitoring process performance with measured or calculated KPIs, I make sure data and reports are available and accurate, support and train end-users and administrators and coordinate with Valero Information Services and Data Historian Support groups.

## Your TrendMiner journey

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### How did you first come across TrendMiner? What was the first problem you were trying to solve?

We have a variety of data sources and use two major different brands of data historian systems. We needed a system that is capable of connecting to and exposing a range of time-series data for analysis and monitoring. The first applications I configured were a series of dashboards with corporate overviews by process unit type for Process Subject Matter (SME) experts. These dashboards include key metrics, trends, monitor statuses/counts and context item views with drill-down into site or unit specific detailed views.

### What was the first moment or use case where you thought, "This really works!"?

When I finished configuring my first corporate dashboard showing data from 10+ data sources and witnessed how useful and time saving it was for our Process SMEs. Our data usage reports continue to confirm that these types of applications are being used day in and day out.

**“My first corporate dashboard showing data from 10+ data sources and witnessed how useful and time saving it was for our Process SMEs.”**

## Your Community experience

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### **How did you discover the TrendMiner Community, and why did you decide to become active in it?**

Before the Community existed and even before we officially became TrendMiner customers, I was a big fan of “Chat with us”. I have always been very impressed by the level of commitment from TrendMiner employees in helping confirmed and even potential customers with questions and challenges. To me, it was natural to adopt and the Community and engage as I not only continued to get excellent support from TrendMiner employees but could also exchange with active users.

### **Which parts of the community do you get the most value from? (tips & tricks, questions, webinars, product ideas, etc.)**

Essentially all of them. I make a point at registering to most webinars and watch the recordings if I cannot attend the live session. I often browse tips and tricks to learn new things from others, I post questions when I need technical assistance and I also posted a few product ideas, most of them being considered by the development team. I find all of this interaction and engagement very rewarding.

### **Was there a moment when an answer you found in the Community changed how you worked?**

I was looking for ways to derive a rate of change for some process parameters and found the trick with a calculation using a time shift of the same tag and that was the perfect way to handle this.

### **If you had only read passively instead of being active, what do you think you would have missed? What did being active add for you?**

I would have missed the specific advice that I received from TrendMiner employees and other Community members related to my use cases. Also, some of my expressed product ideas may not have translated into road map items.

## **What kinds of contributions helped you reach the top level? (answering questions, sharing content, helping other members, joining events, etc.)**

It was basically all types. As mentioned above, I found several advantages in using all Community tools and participating at TrendLab to acquire knowledge, enrich our use cases, exchange with peers and somehow contribute to the evolution of the product. Collecting Community points was simply a bonus.

## **When you helped someone or shared something, what kind of response or impact did you see?**

There always have been subsequent feedback, exchange and acknowledgement from TrendMiner employees and/or Community members and this makes the experience very rewarding.

**“There is tremendous value in not only joining the TrendMiner Community but in being an active member.”**

## **Impact & value**

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### **What concrete value has TrendMiner brought to your work or your team? (e.g. time saved, faster root-cause analysis, downtime avoided – a number or example if possible)**

Valero is the largest independent refiner in America. A very limited group of Process SMEs is responsible to ensure operations are safe, efficient and reliable. TrendMiner helped our SMEs with getting the right information faster, the ability to connect and analyze data from multiple sources, detect and analyze events, filter data outliers, etc.

### **If TrendMiner weren't there, how would your work look? What would be slower, harder, or even impossible?**

Process SMEs would have to consult multiple individual reports to get the status of their circuits and we would have to use Excel more to extract, join and analyze data. Filtering data outliers would be much more difficult.

## **Has being an active Community member contributed to your professional growth?**

I became a Community member quite late in my career but I believe it contributed to the enrichment of my acquired knowledge and confirmed my conviction that team work can be extremely powerful.

## **Your legacy & what you leave behind**

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### **What's the achievement or moment you're most proud of in your career as a process expert?**

My unique background allowed me to be at the service of others, like Process SMEs, and I am proud that my work helps them with their day-to-day work and make them shine.

### **What's the most valuable lesson you've learned that you'd say "every process expert should know this"?**

This may sound odd, but I believe that there is a very high value in documenting your work and sharing knowledge. It ensures repeat events and issues are resolved promptly, that the work is clear and accurate, that necessary changes can be expedited and that peers can maintain the applications.

**"There is a very high value in documenting your work and sharing knowledge."**

### **Is there a method, habit, or way of working you'd love to see live on in your team and the Community after you?**

I am surrounded by geniuses, very skilled individuals; I wish they continue to realize how much more they can accomplish if they share knowledge and work as a team.

### **Could you briefly describe a technique or use case in TrendMiner that you'd call your "signature" – something you'd really want others to learn? (like a small playbook)**

I believe well-designed visuals are powerful. I favor consistency in the layouts, colors used, clear labels, dashboards using a hierarchy from summary to detail and including links to external applications and supporting documentation.

## Advice for new process experts

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### **What advice would you give to a new process expert just starting out, or the person stepping into your shoes? Where should they begin?**

Be curious, understand there is always something new to learn, don't be afraid to ask questions, offer assistance when you think you can help ... and document your work.

### **If you could tell a newcomer to “definitely do these two things” – one about the product and one about the community – what would they be?**

Explore the advanced features of TrendMiner and how they can apply to your job, how they can help your peers. Be an active member of the Community; it will help you build your knowledge and everyone can benefit from creative point of views you express.

### **What would you say to someone who hasn't joined the advocacy program or Community or TrendLab yet?**

There is tremendous value in not only joining the Community but in being an active member. The time you invest in it is minimal compared to what you gain from using it. And definitely attend TrendLab; the two-day investment is more than worth it to take a step back, see what is out there, what the product road map is, how others use the product, engage and share with TrendMiner employees and other customers.

**“Explore the advanced features of TrendMiner and how they can apply to your job, how they can help your peers. Be an active member of the Community; it will help you build your knowledge and everyone can benefit from creative point of views you express.”**

### **Anything we didn't ask but you'd like to share?**

I only got to discover TrendMiner late in my career but I am glad I did and that I was able to convince Valero to use it. I wish I had time to do even more. And I truly believe TrendMiner is one of the best companies for recognizing the value in engaging with and supporting their customers.