Introduction of
IT Project Management Standards

Introduction

To support the introduction of a framework for the procedural uniform approach in IT projects at a globally operating group – an important task for the customer to ensure a uniform implementation of projects that is nevertheless tailored to the respective conditions.

The customer

The customer is a globally operating and leading company in its industry and is represented by its several thousand employees in over 100 countries around the world. With his wide range of products, he successfully addresses a wide range of customers.

The task

In the past, the customer group acted decentrally and therefore the locations independently. In order to be able to react to rapidly changing environmental conditions and thus remain competitive, a global IT strategy was required. This included the introduction of a global ERP solution. As part of the strategy implementation, it was also necessary to standardize the approach for implementing global projects and to ensure that the requirements of future audits were met. The HCM Consultant Group was brought in with its experience in this area.

The approach

For the implementation of uniform IT project management standards, a multi-stage procedure has been defined:

1. Definition of a basic project life cycle and associated documentation requirements
2. Creation & introduction of first document templates for use in projects as well as start of the creation of a project management manual
3. Introduction of further documentation requirements

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In the first step, a basic project life cycle was determined, from the initiation, through planning and implementation, to the completion of a project and the relevant documentation requirements identified for the respective project phases. At the same time, criteria for project prioritization have been determined. The prioritization, that will be defined when a project is released, results in the minimum requirement for the documentation that a project must meet, i.e. a project with high priority has to meet all documentation requirements identified in the project life cycle. In contrast, a project with low priority has to fulfil them only partly. As a result, the effort for the documentation is lean and appropriate for the respective project.

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In the second stage, the first document templates for use were created. After their final acceptance they were presented and explained in more detail to the project managers in separate appointments and then introduced. When the first templates were introduced, the documentation requirement was initially restricted to the top priority global and local projects. There were two reasons for this. First, documentation is the most important for projects with the highest priority. Secondly, with the limited introduction and a step-by-step introduction process, it seemed better possible to achieve acceptance for these innovations by the project participants compared to an complete introduction at once, since the project documentation is often perceived as a time-consuming and therefore unpleasant activity that prevents the actual project work. In addition, the creation of a manual for the defined IT project management standards had been started, which describes the project life cycle in its entirety.

3

In the third phase, the introduction of further document templates started. On the one hand, the expansion of a uniform documentation of all important and always the same aspects, at the times specified in the project cycle, was pushed ahead across all projects. On the other hand, the target-oriented access to these templates enabled the project managers to save time from then on for the creation of documents, since they only had to be filled in with regard to their project. This was advantageous, for example, when a new project had to be applied for. In addition to the usual project description and naming of the project goals for each project, the scope was always clearly delineated and significant milestones were already mentioned at that time.

How HCM supported the customer

The HCM Consultant Group initially supported the customer's IT PMO in reviewing the project life cycle and the defined document templates that had already been created. Here she gave tips on useful adjustments and additions. Furthermore, she supported the customer in the creation of a project management manual. In the further course, during the introduction phase of the document templates, the focus of the tasks changed from the IT PMO into a concrete team of the IT infrastructure department. Here, the HCM Consultant Group specifically supported the project managers in their projects with the highest priority in the implementation of the new IT project management standards and beyond. She supported the team in:

- Creation of decision papers for the management,
- Creation and maintenance of project plans,
- Communication with the IT managers of the countries worldwide,
- Coordination of internal and external project participants and activities,
- Promotion and mapping of project progress,
- Execution of regular status reporting meetings as well
- Ensuring of a proper project documentation.

Added value for the customer

The HCM Consultant Group was able to incorporate its many years of experience when introducing IT project management standards and thus make an important contribution to the customer on the way to lean and effective IT project management. Thus, the customer is also well prepared for potential audits regarding project documentation in the future.

Beyond, the HCM Consultant Group was able to ensure, for example, in a project that new network components went live at a foreign location, despite difficult conditions in times of Corona pandemic. These consisted of both an announced significant delay in delivery of the required hardware due to the lockdown caused by the corona virus in many countries and of the access restrictions to the company. Through close alignment with the customer team and subsequent targeted coordination of activities, the challenges were overcome in collaboration with the team in Germany, the country's IT manager and other external service providers. In the end, the hardware could still be delivered two months earlier, relevant IT components could be configured and then, with an exemption and subject to conditions, the hardware could be installed, tested and successfully went into operation on site, shortly before the Go-Live of the new ERP solution in this country.