

## CASE STUDY:

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE *GROUP OF TECHNOLOGY COMPANIES*

#### The Client

---

Bright Station Plc (Now Smartlogik), a holding group with a total of eight independently operating companies in the IT arena.

Among Bright Station's subsidiaries are Smartlogik, the UK's second largest knowledge management software developers, and Sparza, an e-commerce company built on the platform of the former boo.com.

#### The Project

---

To allow maximum creativity and flexibility, all Bright Station's (BS) companies operate in a fully independent manner. This ensures no centralisation and faster time to market.

The above policy is challenged by:

- management of corporate issues which takes longer to be identified by the corporation
- subsidiary management that may be misaligned from corporate strategy
- duplication of effort that is often incurred by the subsidiaries

All of which result in inefficiency, unnecessary costs and longer decision making processes.

#### The Challenge

---

To establish an organisation and infrastructure model that ensures full visibility across BS subsidiaries and whose role at its highest level is:

- To ensure continuous alignment with the overall corporate strategy.
- Eliminate duplication of effort and ensure utilisation of available resource across all the subsidiaries.
- Develop and produce periodical reports to track progress, guard against risks, and support the above.

This organisation is to be completely independent from the direct influence of any of the subsidiaries and reports directly to the board of directors of BS.

#### Available Systems

---

- Each of BS companies has an intranet network.
- Each employee has Microsoft Office installed on his/her PC, as well as the tools required by their responsibilities.

#### The Solution

---

- Establish a process for projects' proposals and approvals. The process involves a defined set of documentation and an approval methodology to ensure the business case is viable and in line with the corporate strategy.

- Establish the use of scheduling software as standard practice for all project managers. Design templates for the various types of projects.
- Design a global schedule of dynamically integrated project task schedules within BS group. The global schedule allows full visibility of resource utilisation and effort allocation.
- Implement “issue and risk” database accessible by all project managers for viewing. All risks are logged on upon identification and allocated owners for their tracking and management. Criteria for escalation and contingency planning are set.
- Design a set of key reports and their update cycle. Reports cover progress, risk monitoring and resource usage across the group and can be drilled down to project level.
- Establish a bi-weekly meetings with the project managers of all subsidiaries of BS to review reports, share efforts and resource and propose new solutions.
- Allocate two full-time staff to operate the PMO and to train and support the project managers across BS group.
- Training of project owners and key staff.

## Results

---

The outcome was complete visibility across the group as to “what is being done” and “who is doing it”, allowing immediate identification of effort and opportunities for resource sharing, thus increasing cost efficiency and further improving the “time to market”.

The new PMO acted as a central point of assistance and methodology knowledge to all the project managers, thus enhancing their capabilities and inducing a feeling of affiliation and alignment as one group.

All new initiatives were in line with the corporate strategy, thanks to the new project initiation procedures and due to the improved and structured communication between all subsidiaries.

All risks were kept under strict monitoring and control which meant upper and lower management were no longer “caught by surprise” and “fire fighting” due to mismanagement of issues and risks.

## Critical Success Factors

---

- High Management Support for the PMO initiatives
- Clear and exhaustive communication to all involved about their role in the PMO and the benefits to be gained.
- Comprehensive training to the project managers in the effective use of scheduling tools and their added value to the project.
- Regular and defined PMO meetings and project update cycles