

Project Manager

T O D A Y

JUNE 2007

ISSN 1366-6851

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Passport Control

Siemens passport to project success

Siemens IT Solutions and Services provided the entire solution for recording the biometric data and processing it for the production of the new Swiss e-passports.

Achieving a consistent global standard for projects, people and processes is a daunting task. Siemens has tackled the problem head-on by categorising projects and roles, as well as introducing comprehensive training. **Ken Lane** finds out more from Paul Hodgkins and Adrian Logan.

So what is your idea of a small project? Is it less than £20k, less than £200k, or less than £1.5 million? For many companies a £1.5 million project would call for all the project skills they could muster.

At Siemens a £1.5 million project would be classified, simply on its value alone, as a small project. In fact, it will hardly register on the global radar in amongst the 50% of their €87 billion turnover that came from projects business in 2006.

As with all global companies it is hard to grasp the sheer scale of the projects that are under way at any one time: power generation, postal automation systems, medical systems, communication systems, consumer white goods; the list is endless.

All these projects have to be managed and it was in 2000 that Edward Krubasik, a member of the global board at Siemens AG, highlighted the fact that the group's revenue was becoming reliant on fewer but much more complex projects and they needed to be managed successfully.

In fact, Siemens had learnt the hard way through some wayward projects that it needed a better approach. But Krubasik's view was not

simply about plugging any gaps, it was about creating a project framework to which all the business units could subscribe and which would add value and competitive edge to their project processes, tools, products and solutions.

Setting the scene

When you are an organisation of 460,000 employees around the world working in some 190 countries, it seemed a good idea to have a framework for projects. One that would provide a common experience for employees and customers, but without adding bureaucracy in a group that had adopted a federal approach to its control of business units.

It was from these insights that PM@Siemens was born, says Paul Hodgkins who is responsible for embedding the initiative in the UK and North West Europe.

The 12 modules and 53 recommendations contained within the PM@Siemens handbook reflect Siemens view of how projects and programmes should be run within its own organisational culture and requirements. Learning Campus, the German centre, supported by regional hubs across the world provides the expertise that sets the standards globally.

Paul is keen to emphasise that it is not just about the 'project manager', the framework is concerned with all those who are involved in projects from bid and sales managers, to account managers, HR, procurement and legal; in fact, anyone connected with projects.

As well as the framework, Siemens has identified a number of project roles within its career model at the top of which is project director. Anyone either wanting, or already within a project management role is assessed against the competence levels for these roles using a tool developed by Siemens known as PMFutureWorld. This process is supported by review boards where integrity and quality is assured; the project manager or senior project manager can be certified, and potential project directors can be nominated for assessment by Learning Campus in Germany.

Projects are categorised on a sliding scale from A-F, where A would typically be of a higher risk, or value, when compared to a category D or below, which would be recognised as a 'small' project. Siemens has devised a tool which assesses a new project against benchmark criteria to find where it fits on the scale.

Developing a common language

'PM@Siemens is not a prescriptive methodology,' says Paul, 'it's an approach that explains how our projects should be managed from beginning to end.'

'The 12 modules cover such subjects as processes and roles, contracts, controlling projects, etc. Processes and roles, for instance, is about defining the life cycle and milestones. One of the major benefits of PM@Siemens is that anyone working on any project, in any of our businesses throughout the world, will understand what is meant by milestone PM 20 for example; they will all know that is the point at which a bid decision is made.'

'In the past we would all have talked a different language. Now, we literally all sing from the same hymn sheet.'

Giving two further examples he says: 'The second module is all about contract management. One aspect of this is to ensure that the profile of the project is aligned with the right type of project resources. It also covers things like bid/no bid procedures, limits of authority, the role of contract management at the acquisition phase.'

'In the "Project Controlling" module we look at reporting structures, success criteria, and the organisational support structure, while the "Personnel Management" module addresses the project manager in terms of a career model.'

Smaller companies often struggle in setting a career structure for their project managers. They either have too few projects to guarantee continuity, or cannot provide an increasing range of challenges as their projects tend to be all of a certain size and type. At Siemens none of these restrictions apply. The development of people's project skills is seen as a vital part of the framework.

'Project management is not just a function you do: it's a profession and therefore we needed a career path for our people,' says Paul. It is a far cry from Paul's own background. When he was an assistant project engineer 20 years ago no such ladder of opportunity existed, 'I seemed to be making projects work so I was promoted, but there was no system that identified my strengths or

weaknesses and ensured I added value to my next project.'

The Siemens career model explains the competences and attributes that people are expected to demonstrate, whether as a project manager, a senior project manager or a project director. PMFutureWorld allows a project manager anywhere in the world to be benchmarked against the Siemens' standard.

It looks at the projects an individual has managed, the size and complexity of those projects and the leadership required, as well as getting them to answer questions based on various categories linked to the modules and recommendations in the framework and the job role description.

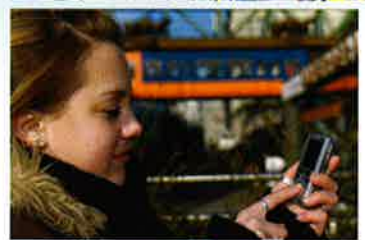
In theory this means that there is a resource pool that can be matched against categorised projects to find the right people for the right projects. In practice, this is working best for placing project directors and senior project managers and Paul admits that they are still working to improve this across all career levels. 'It's an issue in the UK that we are still grappling with but at least we now have the information to make it happen more consistently.'

UK focus

PM@Siemens has been around now for six years but, apart from project directors, it isn't practical to send everyone for training in Germany where the Learning Campus already has pm programmes. So Siemens UK recently established its own Academy to fill the training gaps identified by PMFutureWorld.

Paul, together with his colleague Adrian Logan, learning and development consultant, started this UK initiative, which is administered by their Learning and Development colleague Cathy Nixon. The UK Academy was the first in the world to get the green light from Siemens Learning Campus in Germany for the breadth of offering it provides.

One of the advantages of the Siemens PM approach is that it is delivery focused. The skill set of the project teams has been standardised, but the way in which each country chooses to develop those skills is very flexible. So Paul and Adrian were able to pick relevant modules



As a part of the promotion for the UK Academy, Adrian (left) and Paul (right) were featured in the February issue of SiemensUK.

The same issue showed the need for a strong project culture, illustrated by a recent project where Siemens Medical Solutions and Siemens Enterprise Communications provided the medical equipment and communications for the new 939-bed Queen's Hospital in Romford. A PFI initiative led by Catalyst Healthcare, it involved delivering and later maintaining more than 4,000 pieces of Siemens medical equipment plus state-of-the-art telephone system.



Healthy collaboration

A classic example of cross-selling, two Siemens businesses have joined forces to secure a multi-year contract with one of the UK's largest hospitals.

Siemens Healthcare, the provider of medical equipment, and Siemens Enterprise Communications, the provider of communications equipment, have joined forces to provide a complete solution for the new 939-bed Queen's Hospital in Romford. A PFI initiative led by Catalyst Healthcare, it involved delivering and later maintaining more than 4,000 pieces of Siemens medical equipment plus state-of-the-art telephone system.

Power up your project management

PM@Siemens UK Academy offers training for all

As a company whose projects are complex, project management is a vital discipline. And now employees can take advantage of up-to-the-minute training in PM@Siemens, the company's global project management solution, to help them succeed project successfully.

In January, the PM@Siemens UK Academy began offering modular training programmes in all aspects of project management - from how to plan and lead a project team to contract management and beyond. The aim is to ensure project management is central to all continuously high standards across the UK.

The training is open to all employees, although individual programmes are tailored to different experience levels. Some are suited to project managers and senior project managers who need to go into depth on specific aspects of project management, others cover the basics for would-be project managers or those who might only be involved in some aspects of a project. People can choose to attend full or modular, or a mixture of the two, and can tailor the programme to suit their needs. The Academy also offers 'English for Business' training to help non-UK employees understand the business context.

As well as building the PM@Siemens approach, the training is aligned to the Body of Knowledge used by the Association for Project Management (APM).

People who go through a PM@Siemens Future World programme will not only gain the UK AMB Quality Award for Accredited, but can then go on to gain the full UK AMB Quality Award for Accredited, and can then go on to gain the full UK AMB Quality Award for Accredited, and can then go on to gain the full UK AMB Quality Award for Accredited.

The training has already helped the Academy to secure a multi-year contract with one of the UK's largest hospitals. The Academy is a key part of the Siemens UK Academy's commitment to providing a complete solution for the new 939-bed Queen's Hospital in Romford. A PFI initiative led by Catalyst Healthcare, it involved delivering and later maintaining more than 4,000 pieces of Siemens medical equipment plus state-of-the-art telephone system.



Siemens constructed a treatment plant which converts waste water into drinking water for Singapore's water supply. 40,000 m³ of water are treated daily with the help of ultra-thin membranes and germ-killing UV rays. Singapore plans to expand the plant's capacity to 210,000 m³ per day to cover 20% of Singapore's water consumption.

from Germany, and mapped those against everything from the needs of an aspiring project manager to senior project manager level, and the requirements of PMFutureWorld, as well as the APM body of knowledge.

What they have ended up with is a series of modular programmes that fits with the model for project management careers at Siemens.

The next question was how to deliver those programmes. Different Siemens businesses had their own development programmes using their own preferred contractors. The idea was to move to one focus for delivery and, following a

selection process, they chose The Projects Group based on their track record – some of which was with Siemens businesses – and a feeling that the training company had a similar ethos to developing PM skills as the Siemens model.

They asked The Projects Group (TPG) to establish a programme of training at three levels in accordance with the PM@Siemens framework. The courses had to be consistent with the APM's body of knowledge but delivered in a way that was compatible with the approach taken in other Siemens regions around the world.

Adrian Dooley, TPG's managing director, says that they used their own learning and development system (TPG Academy) to construct a programme that ranges from basic principles of project management at the lowest level, through more detailed topics and simulations at the next level, to advanced business change and project management at the top level.

The overall programme is set to meet all the requirements of the PM@Siemens Academy, but in addition allows individuals to progress on to any UK qualification with the minimum of additional effort.

Paul Hodgkins says that December (2006) wasn't perhaps the ideal month to launch

Siemens UK Academy, but since the launch it has gone from strength to strength and he expects over 300 nominations booked by the end of the year. By April it had become the most popular learning and development programme in the UK.

Paul says: 'We have designed the programme so that the individuals and the businesses can set the speed at which they tackle modules. This means, for instance, that any one module can be reinforced by a period back in the business before the next level is tackled.'

'As well as modules we also have, for instance, a one-day beginners' course which is ideal for people in, say, HR or sales who want a better understanding of project management. There is also a two-day PM fundamentals course which is ideal for members of project teams who need the basics of project management but maybe will not be following the project management career path, or to refresh the knowledge of those who are, or will.'

Having a centralised programme for development means that all those who pass through the courses have the same experience. Even more importantly from Siemens' viewpoint, that experience is based on what the business needs, and not on the perception of different training suppliers' interpretation of the needs of a multitude of different Siemens businesses.

Another plus, says Adrian Logan, is that people from different backgrounds and sectors can network through the course structure, sharing their experiences of project management in, for example, the medical world or power generation.

In such a vast organisation none of the PM@Siemens initiatives could work without high-level sponsorship. It begins at the top with Klaus Kleinfeld, CEO of Siemens AG, who says that project management is at the top of his personal agenda, while in the UK, Paul's sponsor is Jens-Peter Saul who is managing director of Siemens Power Generation business in the UK.

Klaus Kleinfeld sums up their objective: 'It's up to all of us to work together to make "project management – the Siemens way" a permanent part of our corporate culture'. Siemens UK is well on its way to meeting that objective.



New software from Siemens Medical Solutions is being used to support the treatment of cardiac arrhythmia. syngo DynaCT Cardiac delivers slice images of an organ in motion and the software provides three-dimensional displays of the ventricle.



Klaus Kleinfeld

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