PMO FOR A LEADING IT SERVICE PROVIDER
FINANCIAL SECTOR

PMO FOR A LEADING IT SERVICE PROVIDER WITH CLIENTS FROM THE BANKING AND INSURANCE SECTOR: SUPPORT FOR END-OF-LIFE HANDLING OF IT COMPONENTS

An IT service provider for banks and insurance companies needed to consolidate the lifecycle management for provided IT components to avert the risks of insufficient end-of-life handling. With the task of introducing structured workflows and practical project controlling, the in-house EOL task force was dependent on consulting in Project Management Office (PMO).

SOLUTION

Continuous updating of the overview of IT resources and their life cycles. Consolidate inventory management through interdepartmental information exchange. Introduction of structured handling of end-of-life scenarios. Operational support for the replacement of components with EOL status.

BENEFITS / RESULTS

Prevention of business-damaging SLA violations due to availability restrictions and end-of-support cases. Minimise the risk of contract cancellations or significant service reductions.

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1/4

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In order to optimise service level management and minimise risks, a leading IT service provider whose clients are from the financial sector set up in-house end-of-life (EOL) task force. The task force was tasked with

- observe the life cycle of provided IT components
- identify systems that reach end-of-life status within a defined time window and
- consolidate their status within the framework of defined scenarios.

The business success of the IT service provider depends significantly on the deployment and efficiency of the task force. This is because the operation of IT components with expired lifetimes carries the risk that availability restrictions or an end of support will disrupt the daily operations of affected customers. This violates the service level agreement and, in the worst case, the IT service provider is threatened with high service cuts or even contract termination.

THE CLIENT: IT PROVIDER WITH A SENSITIVE TARGET GROUP

For its sensitive target group in the banking sector, the IT provider offers various solutions. Cloud services are just as much a part of the portfolio as comprehensive data centre services and customised applications developed in cooperation with external partners. Insurance companies, banks and financial service providers use the offer to work successfully and optimise their costs.

The provision of software components of varying granularity, the operation of cloud solutions and administrative services meet the highest quality criteria and are carried out in strict compliance with legally defined security standards. Against this background, the retention of a reliable end-of-life workflow as a component of risk management is of significant importance.

THE REQUIREMENT: SECURITY IN DEALING WITH THE LIFE CYCLES OF IT COMPONENTS

The EOL Taskforce focuses on establishing standardised and transparent procedures for dealing with the life cycles of IT components. The aim is to avert the risks of an end-of-life state by ensuring that all threatened systems are brought back into service by a specified time.

1. They are either detached or
2. are in a service extension or
3. have lost their risk potential for the IT provider through the client´s assumption of risk.

The reasons for an existing end-of-support situation were also to be analysed to reduce the high number of projects in the housekeeping area, as this ties up valuable resources in the daily routine of the IT service provider. The dismantling of IT components in an EOL state, on the other hand, was not part of the task force's area of responsibility but was transferred to an external service provider.

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2/4

EVOSULT´S PMO TASKS: CREATING AN OVERVIEW AND ESTABLISHING TRANSPARENT STRUCTURES

In 2018, EVOSULT was commissioned to support the task force of the IT service provider in the Project Management Office. The project started in March 2018 with a comprehensive set of tasks and continues until today in sub-projects with half a year to one year. On the one hand, EVOSULT is involved in project management and, on the other hand, supports the tracking and monitoring of components of the IT infrastructure that do not have any points of contact with the services for large customers.

The tracking includes the condition check of digital resources and monitoring of the life cycles, and a marking of the component status for transparent asset management.

The starting point of the tasks in the PMO is the internal coordination with the specialist departments and, in particular, with IT service management, as they can provide an overview of the existing components. The coordinative activities serve the goal of keeping IT asset management continuously up-to-date and enabling structured lifecycle management. The PMO also prepares a monthly status report, which serves portfolio management as a basis for budget approval. Finally, the governance board is integrated into the workflow and receives the necessary change requests from portfolio management.

THE CHALLENGES: REACTING FLEXIBLY AND PURSUING GOALS CONSISTENTLY

In addition to the PMO provided by EVOSULT, another project manager and two sub-project managers belong to the task force, overcoming several hurdles during the project. Initially, the team had to deal with inconsistent asset management that had been incomplete in the past. In order to precisely analyse IT components and list them in daily updated overviews, it was first necessary to consolidate the data stocks. The task turned out to be a challenge because clarifying open questions and keeping track of life cycles required a time-consuming and labour-intensive bottleneck in communication and organisation.

Unclear responsibilities within and between departments, but also delayed feedback and feedback that was difficult to interpret and had to be additionally verified repeatedly hampered the progress of the work. In addition, the task force's responsibilities repeatedly expanded to include operational tasks. This was the case when a department did not have sufficient competencies or resources to set up a project to replace a discontinued component.

IMPLEMENTATION: CLASSIC PROJECT MANAGEMENT APPLIED TO THE SITUATION

The organisation of work in the task force follows classic project management methods, with the individual approach of the project manager setting the accents in detail. The waterfall model serves as the basis of the cyclical project process.

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3/4

The project plan and the overview of milestones are kept with the standard tools MS Project and Excel. An agile way of working has not yet become established but is being considered.

A regular jour fixe ensures the continuous exchange of information with the entire team. Thanks to good technical equipment, video conferences, and calls and presentations via Skype support collaboration. Although a collaboration platform such as MS Teams has not yet been introduced, the staff could communicate efficiently and perform their tasks from the home office without any problems during the Corona pandemic.

THE PROJECT SUCCESS: HIGH ACCEPTANCE AND SUSTAINABLE IMPACT

EVOSULT was able to establish efficient workflows in the task force together with the client's internal colleagues. Transparent communication and a consistent problem-solving approach have led to a high reputation within the company and at the divisional and management level, which is leed to a high level of acceptance for necessary changes. Structured lifecycle management has been able to sustainably establish itself and counteract the danger of business-damaging SLA violations

ABOUT EVOSULT

EVOSULT is specialized in implementation and rollout projects in medium-sized companies up to multinational corporations. We rely on classical as well as agile approaches in project management. In particular we keep the human factor in the centre of the implementation. EVOSULT's experience in business consulting shows that the transformation in companies is the more successful the more comprehensively all parties involved are involved in the changes.

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