Case study

Sector
Energy

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Delivering Project Management as a Service



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Overview

Having decided to undertake several technology improvement plans to build a more efficient and resilient business our client was looking for a partner with project management expertise to help deliver the projects in a short time frame. They had the team, the tech, the hardware, and software but realised that they also needed somebody to manage the end-to-end lifecycles of these projects to a successful outcome. Having worked with Varo to deliver other projects they knew they could count on us.

Project Solution

A swift handover was required. VARO needed us to react quickly to take over the projects that were already in flight. We provided two project managers to deliver the projects, collaborating closely with VARO's IT team; providing pure 'project management as a service' on a range of projects. Over time, we became part of the VARO team and adapted to their ways of working. VARO trusted us as part of their own team; knowing that we were working in their best interests throughout the projects created a stronger relationship.

Project Approach

There were many considerations to be made and challenges to be faced in a short amount of time; There was only a week to gather as much information as possible about all the projects.

Putting in place project governance was essential, so initially we put in place:

- Project plans agreed with stakeholders
- Weekly reporting
- An end-to-end budget, with ongoing management and tracking
- Governance/stakeholder meetings
- Risk and issue controls
- Supplier management
- Wider VARO team management

With these to build on, we'd established a clear way forward with Varo and the relevant project teams

Our Project Managements' Commitment to VARO

Waterstons project managers truly own the project – we don't just box tick. We focus on the objectives and work closely with VARO to ensure these were met. When things changed, the plan was adapted to keep the project on track and within budget. Regular stakeholder communication and feeding the information that matters to VARO senior management was critical to success across our portfolio of projects. In addition, we carried out the core elements of project management as listed here:

Supplier Management

To deliver the projects, we've been working with third-party suppliers daily, so supplier management was a big focus for us. To help with this, we've been monitoring suppliers' performance against their contractual obligations whilst maintaining a productive relationship throughout the project. As the lead member of the VARO team, we owned the end-to-end project budget, ensuring suppliers were billing correctly and agreeing any additional spend. Many of these third parties were providing ongoing support after project completion, so we've also had to ensure a smooth handover into managed service took place.

Transition Management

Transition management was needed to ensure that day-to-day support continued as normal. Knowledge transfer meetings, ongoing support models and identification of responsibilities were some of the tasks we undertook during the transition process to business-as-usual. It was key for us to engage with the service team as soon as we got involved in the projects. This allowed us to ensure all aspects of the handover into service were in place beforehand and kept the service team involved in project delivery.

Communication and Change Management

Communication was a big part of this project! Stakeholders were located across different countries and therefore a lot of this work was undertaken remotely. Teams stretched from the UK, to the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, and France. By ensuring we had regular communication with the senior team as well as the project teams on the ground, decisions could be made effectively for the business.

During the lifecycle of the projects, there was a lot of change for VARO and their organisation. Waterstons' project managers worked with VARO's third parties and suppliers to manage these changes, which was done in 4 key stages:

- We needed to **understand the change,** be aware of how it is being achieved and why it needs to happen – this was already embedded in the projects itself.

- We then had to **plan the change**, which also included getting sponsors and wider involvement from the business.

- We **communicated the change** – VARO have an internal team for communications and so working with them we could make sure everyone knew why the change was happening and understand how they could adapt along with it.

- We then **implemented the change** – along with VARO, we carried out the plan. We had elements of training, super users, providing extra support where needed and ensuring everyone who was involved knew what to do.

Conclusion

For projects to succeed the project manager needs to totally own the project. Acting as part of the customer's team, to deliver successful outcomes. Sure, we use the standard project management techniques you'd expect; but our people and approach make us very different. We engage to deliver projects as a trusted team member, not just a supplier or consultancy. We're always honest and open about issues and alternative approaches to ensure a successful outcome. For VARO, we still have many ongoing projects and project managers, working alongside their team, take on new projects as required. It's been an ongoing partnership and our work together has been key in helping to move the business forward.