

Project Management – a holistic approach at Computacenter



Project Management – a holistic approach

The deal is done, the sales team have won the business, all that is left to do is roll out the project – straight forward you might think. Yet ask the client and the project implementation team and they may well see things differently!

As the nature of deals becomes more complex, no matter how good the sale, changes to the project are inevitable, from the client's and the supplier's perspectives.

"Historically, Project Managers have relied on their technical expertise to ensure the smooth running of predefined implementations. But today our clients are telling us that, as variables creep in during most projects, a wider range of skills are required to keep both parties happy." Says Huthwaite Consultant, Graham Short.

Two years ago, Computacenter took the decision to change its project ownership model, in order to bring added value to its client relationships. As part of this strategy, the company approached Huthwaite to help develop and implement a commercial awareness

programme for its project managers.

Computacenter is a leading European independent provider of IT infrastructure services and solutions, helping customers make the most of their IT investment by advising on strategy, deploying and integrating appropriate technologies and managing elements of the infrastructure on their behalf.

"In what is often a long and complex sales and implementation process, we recognised the need to equip our project managers with a higher level of commercial awareness and understanding," confirms Nigel Reeve, projects practice manager. "This was essential if we were to ensure a fully commercial approach from pre-sales through to implementation."

"As changes to the implementation plan are inevitable in most projects today - and handling them to the satisfaction of both parties is crucial to the success of the relationship - we specifically wanted our project managers to be seen as expert in this area."

"In response, we worked closely with Huthwaite to build a unique commercial management programme, which blended Huthwaite's strong research-based negotiation skills with a greater understanding of

Computacenter's internal processes and systems. Our goal was to create a durable template, which would ensure that project managers could take the skills and behaviours back to the workplace and put them into practice on an on-going basis."

Skills development for the 60-strong senior project management team is now complete.

"It is already clear that the training is meeting our joint objectives of improving project delivery and creating value for the customer," confirms Nigel.

"Project managers and account managers are working more closely together, talking the same commercial language and with a greater understanding and respect for the part each plays in generating and delivering a successful implementation. Equally, our clients benefit from a more professional, responsive and fully-integrated approach to seamless project delivery."

Nigel is confident that Computacenter will see a measurable improvement in on-target project delivery and even higher scores in the company's post-project customer satisfaction surveys and, as a result, plans are already in place to extend development to the next tier of the project delivery team this year.

“Our project managers have a high level of technical skill in the area of project delivery and form a key part of the Computacenter sales process,” he believes. “By building an additional layer of commercial understanding in this way, they have ‘stepped up a gear’ as business managers and are able, not just to add value but to create value, for both the company and our clients.”

Nigel has also been delighted with Huthwaite’s flexible and

proactive approach to developing a hybrid programme for project managers. *“The team clearly understands our company and our market: as a result, it has been able to adapt its research-based negotiation skills methodologies to meet the tough demands of our business.”*

Graham agrees: *“Our experience with Computacenter reflects Huthwaite’s unique ability to develop behaviour change programmes which can meet both the internal and customer-*

-facing needs of all departments within a business. Here were a group of very experienced and skilled project managers and any development programme needed to reflect this. We were delighted with the commitment shown by the project managers towards honing their commercial skills.”

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