

CASE STUDY

Aerospace

Heterogeneous PM landscape harmonized

Careful preparation, successful migration

The client is a global leader in the market for aerospace products and services. Many of its projects are large-scale efforts that must be managed across locations and borders, or involve security-sensitive data.

The corporate-wide harmonization of the diversified project management landscape toward a common set of tools required far-reaching systemic changes. The aim was to migrate extensive data from several business departments in close cooperation with the users. A major contributor to the project's success proved to be clarifying beforehand which data, based on specified criteria, were to be migrated - and where and how. This preliminary work greatly facilitated the actual migration. The highly complex harmonization of the system was successfully completed in just six months.

In selecting TPG, the company chose a service provider with expertise in both technologies - Microsoft Project Server as the source system and Planisware as the target system for the data migration. In addition, TPG, as the client's long-standing support partner, not only had the relevant industry expertise but also experience with very strict data security requirements.

INDUSTRY

Aerospace

DEPARTMENTS

Aircraft, Space,
Defense Systems, Electronics

SOLUTION COMPONENTS

Planisware Enterprise V6



Martin Hesse (TPG)
Head Key Account Management

“The field lists were meticulously prepared – which took time – and the configuration items and data that were not worth migrating were carefully archived and then deleted.

This provided the foundation for a smooth and efficient migration of the data.”

CAREFUL GROUNDWORK LAID FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESSFUL SYSTEM MIGRATION

Heterogeneous software landscapes that have evolved over time are nothing unusual in a multinational, highly diversified enterprise with a long history. This can also occur when there are changes to the client’s PM system resulting from the consolidation of three departments. Each of these departments had its own set of project management tools.

In 2018, company management made a strategic decision to replace the diverse systems with a shared, corporate-wide solution. After an intensive internal comparison of various products, Planisware Enterprise V6 was selected. For over ten years already, it had been used by one of the company’s departments. The aim was to promote efficiency by standardizing and harmonizing the project planning processes corporate-wide using Planisware Enterprise V6.

TPG had already installed Microsoft Project Server as a comprehensive project management tool at the affected department’s previous company in 2008 and had stayed on board ever since to provide support. „We were now faced with the challenge of retaining the company as a large and valued client despite the change in systems,” recalls Martin Hesse, Head of Key Account Management at TPG.

When bidding for the contract, TPG had in its favor not only its long-standing Microsoft expertise but also its in-depth knowledge of Planisware. „This combination of expertise convinced the client to choose us,” Hesse recalls.

OPTIMALLY ADAPTING THE DATA TO THE NEW TARGET SYSTEM

When the project launched in spring 2020, separate business relationship managers were appointed for each of the affected user communities of the previous PM system. They conducted discussions in the user networks and also served as contact persons for TPG.

„A key issue was: which projects should be migrated to the new system, and which are no longer needed?” explains Hesse. During the data cleanup to eliminate no longer relevant material, the project employees previously responsible were also consulted, some of whom were now working elsewhere.

„We actively sought these people in order to get all the information needed,” says Hesse. A great deal of effort and care was devoted to creating the field mappings. Before the actual migration, they defined which legacy data would be transferred, and how and where it would fit into the new system. Accuracy in preparing these lists ensured a smooth migration and made tedious corrections later unnecessary.

„In endless workshops spread over several weeks, we reviewed these field lists and compared the individual fields of the old system to those of the new one,” reports Hesse. Planisware already includes hundreds of preconfigured fields in the system and customized fields are added to the system based on client needs.

„Of course, we already had extensive experience with the source system, Microsoft Project Server. To optimally adapt the data to the new system, we drew on the expertise of Planisware’s experts and worked very closely with them,” remembers Hesse.



„Together, we dove deep into the different data models of the PM systems.“ Using this as a foundation, further steps were taken, such as prototyping, modeling, and data extraction using complicated queries. For quality assurance purposes, data was repeatedly imported into the system to check that it had been prepared correctly. Concurrent to the quality assurance cycles, TPG developed criteria that the client could use to verify that all data quality requirements had been met. Hespe: „The new PM tool was unfamiliar to many users, and TPG provided the necessary guidelines to help users validate the data.“

Finally, the actual data migration was done incrementally in batches. Dividing it into batches made the process much more manageable and reduced the effort required to identify and rectify any discrepancies in the data. The migration went quite smoothly and there was little need for any corrections. By October 2020, almost six months after the work had begun, the entire project management system had been successfully migrated to Planisware Enterprise V6.

COMPLEX REQUIREMENTS REQUIRE COMPREHENSIVE INDUSTRY EXPERTISE

The requirements placed on the new, comprehensive PM tool by the client company were significant. These included, for example:

- » Managing multinational projects involving numerous stakeholders at several locations in different countries
- » Working with classified and secure networks and data that require special protection prohibiting the transfer of data outside of Germany's borders
- » Project management within the framework of an international cooperative effort involving not only Germany and three other EU countries but also Italian and French companies

To understand the structures and processes involved, it proved helpful that TPG had not only expertise in the old and the new project management tool, but also knew the industry quite well.

Hespe: “Thanks to our many years of experience providing services to this client, we understand how the company organizes and manages its projects.” In addition, TPG has experience in handling particularly sensitive data and can meet the client's strict data protection requirements

COMMUNICATION HANDLED FLEXIBLY WHILE COMPLYING WITH COVID-19 REGULATIONS

Another unforeseen challenge was that the system migration in spring 2020 coincided with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. The associated limitations in personal contact, mobility, and workplace presence required flexibility and additional managerial effort from everyone involved.

Not every interaction during the migration's preparations and implementation could be handled purely digitally. „Being here in person was sometimes necessary, for security reasons at the very least,” explains Hespe. Whenever possible, meetings and conferences were held in person, according to Hespe.

„Direct access to the client's contacts was very important for the system migration's success,” he emphasizes. At the client's site, discussions were held one to three times a week with the user teams or their respective business relationship managers. TPG experts were also readily available at all times to answer any questions that arose. TPG also worked closely with other internal offices and external service providers responsible for setting up and configuring the servers, for example.

“Changing to a completely new tool was a leap into the unknown for many users and it required close communication between the user communities and our experts to resolve questions quickly as they arose.”

PROJECT SUMMARY

The Client: As the market leader in its industry, the client develops and produces innovative solutions for the aerospace industry. The portfolio of the business unit affected by the PM migration includes complex aircraft and defense systems. For the space industry, the company supplies products ranging from electronic components to complete telecommunication relay platforms, satellites, and spacecraft.

The Solution: First, a business relationship plan was set up. TPG was able to quickly resolve all the questions that arose by working closely with the contact persons in the respective user communities. The data derived from around 500 projects, some of which are very large, was carefully prepared for the new system and migrated gradually in several batches. Despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 safeguards, the entire migration was completed in just six months, from May to October 2020.

The Challenge: In 2018, the company made the strategic decision to standardize project management corporate-wide. After an internal analysis of the various options, the client selected an on-premise solution Planisware Enterprise V6. Until then, different tools had been in use. Switching to a single tool required the migration of large, complex, and sometimes highly sensitive data. The project launch in 2020 coincided with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Benefits: The client harmonized its heterogeneous project management landscape corporate-wide within a relatively short period of time. The extensive amount of data, some of it being security-related, has been successfully migrated in a way that safeguarded its quality while at the same time carefully cleaning and streamlining it. Despite the complete change in systems, the company can continue to rely on TPG for further support.



SOLUTION PROVIDER

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