



Running resource management with clinical effectiveness

There comes a time when using Excel spreadsheets for project management just doesn't cut it any more when you're developing complex medical instruments. Especially when there are hundreds of different products under development at any one time. That's exactly what happened to the German firm KARL STORZ. The issue was made more complicated by the fact that – as an international company – products are developed by virtual product development teams located in different countries. That increased the scope for errors while emailing resource planning spreadsheets from person to person. So KARL STORZ decided to introduce a modern project, portfolio and resource management solution based on Microsoft Project Server and SharePoint and integrate it with the company's SAP system. The benefits of this solution include time savings, data consistency, improved cost allocation, easier collaboration and better resource planning.



endoscopy with software solutions to achieve integration in the operating room and to support clinical process and resource management.

Keeping a finger on the pulse of resource management

The Excel-based solution had functioned well for quite some time and most users involved there happy with it. However, with an increase in the number of virtual teams and especially with the range of products and solutions, managing resources became much more complex.

"The level of complexity has increased enormously over the last few years – and that made it crucial to start thinking about a more modern solution to manage resources effectively," says Johannes Rehberg, Director Project Support Services at KARL STORZ. "Another concern was how to improve the consistency of data flowing into SAP and improve the cost allocation process."

Since its beginnings in 1945, the KARL STORZ family company has grown into a global manufacturer and distributor of endoscopes, medical instruments, and devices. Based in Tuttlingen in southern Germany, it has production facilities in Europe and the US as well as sales and marketing subsidiaries around the globe.

Its range of endoscopic instruments for human medicine, veterinary medicine, and industrial endoscopy now includes more than 15,000 products. The most recent KARL STORZ developments are in digital documentation systems and comprehensive operating room concepts. As a system supplier, the company combines its expertise in

SAP was also in use to store quality-related documents. As different business units were using the Excel-based project plans in different ways, the company needed to streamline the process to ensure that project managers and executives always had their finger on the pulse of each project's status and progress.

Industry

- Medical Engineering

Department

- Product Development

Solution components

- MS Project Server 2013
- MS SharePoint Server 2013
- TPG PSLink (SAP Integration)
- TPG ResourceLink
- TPG MTA Server

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KARL STORZ

Detailed needs analysis and selection process

Johannes Rehberg and his team started out in 2012 by drawing up an exhaustive list of needs and requirements for a modern portfolio, project and resource management system to solve these problems. They interviewed hundreds of people in different departments throughout the organization to ascertain exactly what functions and processes would most help the development people on the front line. These conversations gave rise to a detailed list of specifications that was matched against a list of tools and solutions.



“We started out with a list of 60 possible solutions but quickly narrowed it down to eight. We then thoroughly tested all eight, involving a lot of users as well as IT people,” notes Rehberg.

Decision for Microsoft Project and an international partner

KARL STORZ decided on a solution based on Microsoft Project Server and SharePoint as a few of the US staff had been using Microsoft Project (albeit an older version) and SharePoint was well suited to collaboration in virtual teams – an important consideration at the company.

The shortlisted solution providers worked with Microsoft Project but the company selected TPG The Project Group. Rehberg: “There were two main reasons for that – their TPG PSLink product to integrate Microsoft Project Server with SAP, and the fact that they’re international. We needed a company who could react fast if someone on the other side of the world needed support, and TPG answers that requirement.”

The decision was taken to move ahead with TPG and Microsoft Project in October 2013. The firm held workshops, initially in the USA, to study project processes more closely and to facilitate their inclusion in the final deployment. This was followed by test installations to run a series of pilot projects of different types.

Once the system went live in May 2014, Rehberg’s team and the project teams worked together with TPG specialists to gradually add more and more projects. During that period, they fine-tuned and optimized the system to ensure that it accurately reflected product development processes and improved process management.

More ease of use due to integrated systems

By the fall of 2014, the company already had hundreds of active development projects running on the system and over 1200 regular users. The users who took to the system quickly acted as “ambassadors” for it and helped others around them whenever they had questions. This train-the-trainer aspect has helped increase user acceptance as the system expands throughout the organization, although the company also holds more formal training courses in different locations.

The ease of use factor is an important benefit of TPG PSLink too. “Project staff can work on costs with MS Project, while our accounting people – who are happier using SAP – can stay within their familiar environment,” notes Rehberg. “The important thing is that both groups are using the same information. Data consistency is crucial when there are hundreds of projects on the go at any one time.”

Simplified resource management and milestone monitoring

Another benefit is that international teams can work with their local currency and enter costs in dollars, Swiss francs and euros, which are then converted automatically in SAP. The company has also implemented TPG ResourceLink, which im-

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The Company: KARL STORZ is a global manufacturer and distributor of endoscopes, medical instruments, and devices. Its range of endoscopic instruments for human medicine, veterinary medicine, and industrial endoscopy now includes more than 15,000 products. The most recent KARL STORZ developments are in digital documentation systems and comprehensive operating room concepts. Headquartered in Tuttlingen (Germany), the company has subsidiaries all over the world.

The Challenge: The company's product development specialists are located around the world and work in virtual teams. Previously, they had been working with various types of Excel spreadsheets to manage their projects and plan resources. With increasing complexity, internationalization and more products to develop, this quickly became a major challenge, leading to the company's decision

to implement a unified, professional project management system for everyone.

The Solution: KARL STORZ' new project management solution is based on Microsoft Project Server and SharePoint. The company has also implemented TPG PSLink to automate data synchronization between SAP and Microsoft Project, along with TPG ResourceLink, which facilitates the population and constant update of resource information in Microsoft Project Server.

The Benefits: With the new system, KARL STORZ always has accurate, up-to-date information available about which resources are available to work on specific projects. It also has an accurate overview of project progress available at the touch of a button. User acceptance is high and the system is now being extended to users in other departments.



ports available resources into Microsoft Project automatically and ensures resource information is always up to date.

In addition, TPG Milestone Trend Analysis (MTA) gives KARL STORZ project managers a clear overview of how their projects are evolving over time. Also, the project teams make full use of SharePoint functionality for document and change management and to accelerate and facilitate team collaboration, especially when developing new product ideas. Today, the project management system covers portfolio planning, scheduling, cost planning, timesheet logging and resource planning.

Gradual, phased implementation approach

KARL STORZ deliberately took a gradual approach to implementation to minimize disruption. As is often the case with a change of system involving hundreds of projects and over a thousand users, it can take time for people to adapt the way they work. "The team at KARL STORZ took on an extremely demanding project that involved multiple changes to business processes and even to the corporate culture – all at once," comments Peter Huemayer, director of The Project Group's subsidiary in Austria and the lead project manager for the KARL STORZ implementation. "In a large global organization like KARL STORZ, this changeover

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is a long process that needs to be implemented in a sustainable way. KARL STORZ is progressing rapidly with it and will succeed in implementing these changes to everyone's satisfaction."

Benefits: up-to-date project information always available – and accurate

"The new system saves a lot of time in terms of gathering information from different business units," says Rehberg. "Everyone involved uses the same system to enter their hours and costs, which has made processes much more efficient

throughout the company. And with this unified approach, management has immediate access to information about which resources are available for a project, how the cost situation is looking for each project or sub-project, and where a project manager needs to intervene to readjust resource utilization." Resources are now deployed more efficiently based on accurate, up-to-date information accessible at the touch of a button.

Next steps

With about 1500 users, high acceptance and clear benefits for the product development teams worldwide, the system initiated by Johannes Rehberg has caught the eye of other staff too. "We've started extending the use of the system to the financial and IT departments for their projects and will likely add organizational teams too by the end of 2015," he comments. "So far, it's been a great success and the TPG products as well as TPG consulting services have played a major part in that."

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