

NEWS

WHY ONE UK GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME CHOSE A HOSTED VERSION OF MICROSOFT PROJECT SERVER'S EPM SOLUTION

When a vital UK Government programme to replace its emergency service staff's legacy communication equipment was contemplated, the choice of the right solution to help manage the programme became significant. The programme, charged with the delivery of nearly £1/2billion worth of work, was to be extended throughout England and would result in emergency staff having state of the art, digital data systems to improve vital communications. The change programme's size and complexity was further increased by the number and distribution of these projects throughout the country, together with the interdependencies with sub-contractors, government departments and regions. But at stake were human lives and the risk of being hauled over the coals by the press if the programme was not seamless and problem free.

To succeed, a management solution would need to be adopted quickly, improve the efficiency of meeting targets, increase effectiveness throughout as well as demonstrating value for money. The programme manager needed total visibility of all projects, sub-projects, resources, tasks, risks etc to provide strong internal governance. On top of this, he needed it within a matter of months. For these reasons a hosted Enterprise Project Management solution was chosen.

As the project managers were familiar with Microsoft Project, the Microsoft Server EPM solution was the preferred choice. However, the huge security and logistical problems involved in installing software on every project manager's desktop were deemed to be insurmountable within the timeframes; so the programme chose to access the software as a service, using Program Framework's pre-configured hosted solution to gain high availability and high security within a short deployment timescale.

This hosted solution meant that the managers could self install the client side software after Program Framework had configured the back end solution. Not requiring additional hardware, just a standing monthly charge, brought cost savings as did the programme's ability to turn licences on and off.

WHY THE DEPLOYMENT WAS SUCCESSFUL

The programme started off with a very clear view of what needed to be achieved and was not overly ambitious. By starting the project off small and building on its success the programme manager improved the chance of success. Also, by spending time early on thinking about the business processes, the Program Framework team could understand the emergency services' business quickly and translate these business processes into the detailed EPM configuration.

The "people change" aspects were also well managed, making certain everyone using the system attended the Program Framework two day training course – then ensuring consultancy time was available for coaching and mentoring staff on site to put their plans into the system and spend time answering individual questions. To encourage all the users to access the system the programme undertook random checks on how each manager was doing, checking material on line and offering help desk support, as well as sending links to essential information within the system rather than attachments. All of this built the change momentum within the organisation and overcame the first two hurdles to people change, Denial and Rejection!

CONCLUSION

The programme now has: all projects working to template plans (tailored to local needs), complete visibility of progress, the ability to share information quickly and easily between projects and essentially has become a more efficient organization with significantly improved governance. This could not have been achieved without a hosted solution given the complexity of the programme, the timescales and geographical dispersion of the team.

ENDS

Program Framework

Program Framework, <http://www.programframework.com> offers a unique way of implementing enterprise project and portfolio management solutions, helping organisations maintain full control over key business change programmes. Its approach recognises that projects are fundamental to the implementation of an efficient corporate change process that drives competitive edge, strategic delivery and stakeholder value.

Established in 2005, Program Framework draws on its directors' many years of corporate experience in managing complex business changes with multiple projects, stakeholders and resources, in a "joined up", accessible way. This enables the team to bring a unique business-driven focus to solution deployment in addition to the more traditional project management and technical skills. Using its exclusive Rapid Implementation Methodology, Program Framework's fast growing team of London-based consultants enables clients to consistently deliver the right projects on schedule and to cost.

Program Framework is a key Microsoft Certified Partner and focuses solely on EPM; consequently it is the fastest growing pure EPM consultancy in the UK.