

CASE STUDY

Project Definition and Delivery at an International Chemical Company



Aim	Improve engineering processes and update project management systems
Status	Quantified analysis completed and subsequent recommendations implemented
Client	Global Chemical Company
T.A. Cook	Chosen for their track record in engineering process and project management expertise

A large chemical site finished a company restructuring project, which included creating new business units. After this phase of the venture was completed, they sought to move a step further and increase efficiency, build on core competencies and reduce their reliance on contractors. The site had trouble with their young staffs' lack of experience as well as apparently conflicting demands as their projects grew in complexity and internationalization. Although the site had mixed success from previous consulting projects, they turned to T.A. Cook to improve the complex relationships between production, engineering and site management.

Approach

As part of the site analysis, the consultants conducted an expert study on the site's project and process management, roles and responsibilities, skills and core competencies, resource management, scoping definition and changes, time logging, and the cost allocation and justification mechanisms already in place. After the series of audits, the targets were filtered and quantified by project type and phase. These factors were important in the quantification of accurate benefits.

The findings uncovered a wholly-underestimated workload of small sub-projects which took up an estimated 30% of many engineers' time. Much of the staff frequently accepted unofficial requests for assistance without logging time, effort and the associated costs. Inevitably, this led to a vicious circle of poor scope definition, indifferent project performance and re-work. The consultancy determined that if the same teams were well-organized, motivated and trained, time spent on established projects could increase by 15%.

Achievements

The site used to this study to implement a 12-month project, involving 300 people. The work resulted in significant benefits to the engineering department and several business units as well as a sense of improved worth for the staff themselves.

Benefits

- 10-15% improved on-time, in-full project delivery
- Accurate project scope identified
- Engineering staff utilization improved by 15%
- Stabilization of 2008 contractor levels (versus 10% expected increase)
- Improved response time to smaller tasks and requests
- Managed transfer of basic skills to business units

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