
Experience report Windmüller & Hölscher

In 1999 and 2000 in the house of Windmüller & Hölscher the decision is made to replace the existing IT systems by SAP R/3. These legacy systems passed with flying colours the hurdle of the year 2000 but they were so much interwoven among each other that a further development did not make sense. So in autumn of the year 2000 a project was brought into being whose objective was to introduce SAP R/3 by the 1st January 2002.

Since the legacy systems already had been attended by a brilliant IT-team it was self-evident that the SAP project as well would be accomplished in large part with the own staff. For this purpose the internal IT-team was supported and instructed by two experts for project management in the field of SAP coming from OrgaTech GmbH. The whole project was subdivided into professional part projects and in the fields of coordination and of HR the project team was strengthened by external SAP consultants. This formation allowed the completion of all assigned and additionally occurred tasks during the scheduled period of time of 15 months, so that on the 1st January 2002 SAP could be introduced with success. This initial package contained besides the classical ERP-modules some special elements like PS system, variant configurator, materials ledger and many others. Since at the same time the BDE – system had to be renewed it was taken for granted that CATS would be used in future as well. After some negligible turbulences that arose during the first three months on 31 March 2002 all existing systems could be shut down and the old hardware could be disassembled.

During the first year W & H was able to achieve the same performance as in the previous years. On 21 February 2003 at 16:00 o'clock the SAP production system had been in operation exactly 10.000 hours without unscheduled interruptions. So the responsible persons of W & H had a good reason to celebrate the successful conclusion and to dignify those who made the project run so well. The representatives of SAP and of OrgaTech GmbH who attended the event also pointed out their impression about the project run.

They confirmed the exemplary accomplishment of the project, but they admitted that the continuously growing volume of the modules which had to be introduced and the pace of realisation sometimes made them get cold feet (by the way: So did we).

Besides the project activities W & H also succeeded in building up an SAP CCC (Customer Competence Centre) that meets all the quality demands of SAP. That's why on 21 February 2003 the SAP representatives handed out the SAP certificate to W & H.

At that time the required task for the SAP-project was the "**creation of a basis for optimisation of the IT landscape**". This meant high investment costs and a lot of work. Now the crucial task is to reduce in a sustainable way the costs in the house of W & H by continuous optimisation of organisational and IT-related factors on the basis of the new IT landscape.

So after completion of the project we can say that due to the deep internal know-how of the project teams and of the project management experts of OrgaTech GmbH, Lünen, the project could be accomplished in the scheduled period of time. It became evident that the right mixture of competence and experience decides the success of a project.

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