Project Management for Atlas Copco

Atlas Copco is an industrial group with world-leading positions in compressors, construction and mining equipment, power tools and assembly systems. The Group delivers sustainable solutions for increased customer productivity, through innovative products and services.

Project # 1: procurement of a new intranet for the Group Treasury in Sweden

The project was investigative and development oriented in its nature, where the phases followed are the ones outlined in the "Process" document.

The Group Treasury of Atlas Copco wanted a new intranet as the old one was out of date, content and design wise, and difficult to update. The goal with a new intranet was to simplify the communication with subsidiaries, as well as making the daily work of the Group Treasury unit more simplified.

In Phase # 1, interviews were held with all stakeholders of the current and future intranet. Interns were also engaged, to get less biased input; psychologically, people who have been used to a specific system, process or platform will tend to think of new solutions in relation to the old system, i.e. the new platform B is thought of in terms of old platform A (ex. the OS used, functionalities available, hardware, daily routines).

For the subsidiaries not stationed in Sweden, interviews were held via phone and e-mail; these correspondences included most of the Group's subsidiaries and their respective managers and project leaders.

A time line and requirement specification document was written as well as agreeing on an official sponsor of the project (i.e. main responsible counterpart). The project was carried out in 'Sprints', in an 'Agile' project development process (see the Appendix A for an explanation of the 'Agile' and 'Sprints' concepts).

In Phase # 2, documentation and data collection, information regarding the current system was gathered and documented. The interviews were digitalized.

Defining the project, its scope and goal hinged on properly understanding the needs of the stakeholders; Phase # 3 was crucial in getting there. It became clear that a new intranet was indeed needed, as the old web based one was out of date, and few knew how to update it (the ones who did had left the firm a while ago). An out of date

intranet entailed difficulties in the communication with clients, which increased costs as subsidiaries e-mailed and called frequently to get the latest news regarding important financial data. Furthermore, the subsidiaries did not know who their main contact at HQ was and what the different functions of the Group Treasury division actually did.

A requirement specification was written targeted for the intranet provider, in communication and agreement with the stakeholders.

Different distributors of intranet solutions where approached, both external and internal ones. Cost was compared to usability and functionality and time of deliverance.

Photographers and writers where approached, to get cost estimates and proposals. The reasons these resources where engaged was to increase awareness of what the Group Treasury does, and who they are. To achieve this increased awareness, the intranet needed

1. Comprehensive and easy to understand text regarding what the Group Treasury and its different functions and responsibility areas do
2. Professional photographs of the Group Treasury teams; as they travel to the different subsidiaries, those engaged locally may be able to contact them via the intranet, even if they do not remember their exact names. As communication peaks during reporting times (i.e. end of year), these subsidiaries are likely to only talk to Group Treasury at these specific times and need to know who to contact quickly.

An additional service required was delivery of financial data, such as tickers and currency data.

Having found and agreed on providers of intranet, financial data, writers and a photographer, the implementation Phase 4 was initiated.

The project took place during a 3 month period, and was handed over to a delegated product owner within the Group Treasury team. The material handed over contained everything related to the project; detailed text and data information regarding the process and who to contact from the different suppliers engaged in the project. The intranet was then launched by the Group Treasury team worldwide.

Project # 2: Cash Flow model for the Algerian Client Center (subsidiary) in Algeria

The subsidiary in Algeria (Alger) needed to enhance the efficiency of their procurement procedure as to have a balanced cash flow throughout the year and avoid liquidity shortage. The country manager wanted an

Excel/VBA based model which all his managers could use to estimate how their purchases affected the cash flow of the subsidiary during a given 12 month period. The model result was to be the base of their monthly discussions regarding procurement of products from other product centers in the Group.

Phase #1 was not extensive, and involved mainly management as it was they who took decisions regarding which machines to procure. Phase #2 was done in parallel, as it was important to quite early in the process understand how a possible new VBA-based model could be integrated with current software (if at all possible).

A requirement specification was written, where the sponsor and counterpart was the country manager. The project was carried out in 'Sprints', in an 'Agile' project development process.

The focus was not so much on the VBA Cash Flow model per se, as on the process of creating it together with the team and giving an insight into the importance of seeing the long term effect on the whole balance sheet of their own, local department purchases.

The project took place locally, during a 3 month period. The project handover was done in phase #4, and educational sessions regarding the model where held with the team and individual team members where they got the opportunity to ask individual questions relating to the model.

Appendix A – The Agile methodology

On a ski trip in February 2001, 17 software developers met up and wrote 'The Agile Manifesto', where they describe the twelve principles of agile software. A new way of developing IT systems was born.

Agile is a set of iterative and incremental development methodologies that aim to improve quality and success rates in IT system development.

SCRUM can be described as an agile development process consisting of a set of "sprints" lasting for about one to four weeks each. Tasks are described and prioritized in a backlog, which is continuously updated at the beginning of each sprint. The buyer typically meets the development team when each sprint starts, but does not influence the team in-between such meetings.

SCRUM is an iterative process, unlike the traditional linear waterfall process, which makes it possible to go back and change specifications from the buyer organization. This also makes it difficult however, to plan in advance how to develop a project in a straight line fashion.

Text for Appendix A has been taken from the paper by Roula (2011); "Usability in financial firms – a distant dream or reality?"