

BACKGROUND

Between 2004 and 2009, a well-known regulator launched several new business initiatives, merged with another regulator and chose to address dire issues with some aging, mission-critical systems. This business investment spurred significant change and growth in the IT organization. By 2007, what was once a maintenance portfolio had mushroomed into a hundred new projects staffed by several hundred new people.

CHALLENGES

As if managing a large portfolio of high impact projects wasn't enough, the IT organization faced the daunting task of communicating a large volume of fast changing, complex information reliably and simply to its nervous stakeholders. Several local factors conspired to complicate management and communication of the project portfolio:

- The federated structure of the organization resisted centralized control.
- The staff was used to the small changes of maintenance activity, but was inexperienced in green fields, modernization or innovative projects.
- Project management discipline was ad hoc.
- A focus on speed set the stage for cutting corners.

SOLUTION

Computech staff seized the initiative to create a project portfolio dashboard to bring to light core project information. Five key project management activities were addressed as simply as possible: budget, schedule, staffing plan, scope definition and risk management. The approach was wildly successful. The main success factors flew in the face of conventional approaches:

- Hide nothing. Visible to the whole company, the dashboard provided summary views of the portfolio, drill-downs to detailed project views and access to real project artifacts. Canned reports targeted different users needs, e.g., managers, the PMO, executives, and the Board of Directors.



Six practices every project manager must master for effective project management.

Having trouble managing your project portfolio?

After Computech staff harnessed the power of this organization to yield stellar results, we recognized that many organizations share the same challenges. As an applications development firm with many years of experience, Computech created **TrueViewPM**, a project portfolio dashboard platform to help other organizations achieve similar results.

TrueViewPM is easy to setup and use. The solution boils down to a clever application of technology to facilitate skills improvement and behavior change. We focus on three core elements: enabling project managers with the least possible disruption, leveraging technology for aggregation and communication, and supporting people in challenging situations with targeted coaching to elevate performance.

To arrange an online demonstration and discuss your portfolio management issues, please contact us at (301) 656 – 4030.

(Solution Details cont'd)

- Capture data once, from living management artifacts. The dashboard eschewed duplicative data entry and status reporting. Managers used standard project management tools they were already comfortable with. The dashboard collected, parsed, aggregated and displayed this data regularly and automatically.
- Emphasize sound project management and reporting will follow. Project managers were provided training, documentation, coaching and mentoring – not just during rollout, but ongoing to reinforce project management discipline. Support focused on industry best practices, not checkbox artifact inspection.
- Incremental improvement. Both adoption and dashboard capabilities were gradually increased. Starting with a few critical projects, all IT projects were eventually enrolled. Even some business projects adopted the approach, of their own accord. Initial functionality was restricted to schedule, staffing, risk management and scope control. Budget, quality and build metrics and other features were added as the organization rate matured.

NOTABLE RESULTS

The dashboard helped to contribute to a near perfect record of on-budget, on-time, as-expected delivery of valued projects over the ensuing years. An outside assessment by a well-known industry luminary called this “one world-class tool.”

Key benefits included:

- The organization’s perception of IT changed from “unpredictable” and “of unknown value” to “dependable and appreciated.”
- Absorption of new staff was painless due to consistent and clear project management practices and expectations.
- Routine review through the dashboard identified poor project behaviors early enough to allow a course correction and avoid project difficulty.
- Productivity increased substantially. Duplicative reporting in multiple formats to different stakeholders was eliminated, everyone had 24x7 access to the same up-to-date information, and ad-hoc requests by senior stakeholders that once took days to answer now took minutes.

Information technology firm, Computech, Inc., develops, implements and maintains business-critical information systems for public/private organizations. Computech offers expertise in data-driven dashboards; legacy system modernization; business process modernization; revenue-based collection systems; change management; and has an industry leading international auction/spectrum management practice.