

Systemation’s Practical Approach to Project Management Training Helps Leading Global Financial Services Organization Increase Project Accuracy, Improve Efficiencies and Reduce Risk

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~ Senior Program Manager, Global 500 Financial Services Organization

GLOBAL FINANCIAL SERVICES

A major global financial services organization moves, lends, invests and protects money for more than 27 million customers around the world. With over 123,000 employees worldwide devoted to these tasks, the organization must be able to work as efficiently and flawlessly as possible, which requires effective and consistent project management practices. But with thousands of employees spread across dozens of business units around the globe, it’s not surprising that a wide disparity of project management approaches and methodologies had taken root within the company over the course of its 300-year history.

“Our project managers come from many different backgrounds,” stated the company’s senior program manager. “Some have been through advanced levels of project training, while others became project managers by mere accident. Many have used the Prince2 methodology, which had been our predominant methodology for quite some time, but even that wasn’t being used consistently across the board.”

THE COMPANY TAKES STOCK, THEN SEARCHES FOR OPTIONS

Hoping to bring more consistency and effectiveness to its project management practice, a team of senior managers and executives headed by the senior program manager, decided to take stock of their project managers’ competency levels. In addition to helping improve efficiencies and performance across the organization, the team also believed the assessments would give its project managers the knowledge they needed to further progress along their personal and professional growth paths.

After studying project histories and looking at how and where improvements could be made, it quickly became evident to the team that they wanted to institute a more minimalist approach to project management, and adopt a less prescriptive methodology than it currently embraced. Driven by an overarching goal to align business strategies with project executables and deliver them in the least amount of steps possible, the team went about developing an internal project framework loosely based on



A global financial services provider selected Systemation to help the company develop a more effective project management framework. To date, over 410 employees have successfully completed Systemation’s ongoing Project Management programs.

Systemation employed its highly-renowned experiential and practical training approach, which ensured that students could take the learned concepts and immediately apply them in their daily workplace. As a result, the organization is realizing greater efficiencies, broader skill levels, increased flexibility and higher performance levels and success rates.

methodologies prescribed by the Project Management Institute (PMI).

“We seriously considered the Prince2 methodology as a standard, but it was very prescriptive,” stated the senior program manager. “The emphasis wasn’t on practice, skills or common sense, and it was very inconsistent. It became more about checking boxes than it was about executing on projects. We had used it extensively in the past, and I must say we had some very beautifully documented failures.”

After implementing a new PMI-centric project management framework internally, the next step was to get project managers up to speed. So the team began the search for a training partner that shared their penchant for practical project management. The team wanted a partner that would offer a good blend of academic and professional credentials – one that could bestow the formal certifications its project managers needed, but more importantly one that could help the company achieve measurable business results. They found there were not many project management training providers that fit the bill.

“We did our due diligence and looked at several providers,” stated the senior program manager. “We looked mostly at local firms, an approach that was most favored at first. There were a lot to choose from, but they all seemed to offer pre-packaged courses that hadn’t been changed in years. And most were based on Prince2. We needed something fresh.”

After becoming disenchanted with the offerings of local training companies, the team decided to more seriously consider international providers. After an exhaustive search, the team unanimously chose Systemation – a results-driven training and

consulting company that maximizes the performance of individuals and organizations by instilling practical, immediately-usable project-related processes and techniques across the enterprise.

“With clients now in Europe, Australia and South Korea, Systemation is becoming an international force,” stated the senior program manager. “For an organization like ours that has such a huge international presence, it is important for us to work with partners that understand that perspective. It’s a great mutual relationship.”

Unlike most training and consulting companies that provide highly theoretical advice, Systemation is known for its practical learning solutions that are tailored to fit a wide array of business analysis and project management needs. Systemation has helped improve the business performance of many Fortune 2000 companies, including Nike, McDonald’s, Whirlpool, Sony, Bank of America, Cigna, ConocoPhillips and many others.

“A lot of our executives came from Washington Mutual, and they had significant exposure and very positive experiences with Systemation,” stated the senior program manager. “We also liked the fact that all of Systemation’s courses are based on competencies defined by PMI. Systemation quickly became our favorite candidate, which is saying a lot because for us to go with a foreign provider they really had to bring a lot to the table.”

SYSTEMATION GAINS CURRENCY

To validate its choice in Systemation, the team decided to test its new provider with a pilot program. So, it put 15 project managers through Systemation’s Fast Start in Project Management course. The team carefully reviewed the entire process, analyzing everything from the course syllabus and long term uses to costs and return on investment.

“Overall we were very pleased,” stated the senior program manager, “but people are extremely demanding around here and we found some things in the pilot that we wanted tweaked. Systemation was more than willing to make these accommodations, and that is one of the main things we liked about them – their ability to respond quickly, work with us and be flexible and dependable.”

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More than satisfied with the pilot program, the financial services organization worked with Systemation to conduct a pre-workshop knowledge assessment three months later to establish benchmarks and tease out individual areas of weakness. By the following month the company was offering both of Systemation’s comprehensive Practitioner and Advanced Project Management

curriculums. In only 10 months, roughly 410 people had completed one or both of these training programs.

“We get feedback after each course, and the main thing we hear is that our students are learning in a very dynamic and experiential environment, not lecture style,” stated the senior program manager. “Systemation trainers have a real knack for bringing real world experience to the classroom, and that helps our students take what they’ve learned, immediately apply it in the workplace and share it with others. It wasn’t at all like the type of training we had been used to – and that was a good thing.”

SYSTEMATION DELIVERS HIGH RETURN ON TRAINING INVESTMENT

Since the major financial institution began its partnership with Systemation, more people are performing with higher competency levels; more individuals are able to move from one project to another due to a deeper and wider range of

skills; and an increase in resource flexibility has allowed the company to react quicker and better to change. Bottom line – overall project success rates have improved, as the company sees more projects being completed on time and on budget.

The project managers that have gone through the Systemation courses have a higher degree of knowledge than those who haven’t, and are able to execute projects better and with greater degrees of accuracy.



“We require all participants to do post-workshop assessments,” stated the senior program manager, “and the project managers that have gone

through the Systemation courses have a higher degree of knowledge than those who haven’t, and are able to execute projects better and with greater degrees of accuracy. As a result, we have really improved our project efficiencies and have reduced our reputational risk. I can truly say that vast improvements have been made, and would definitely recommend Systemation without hesitation to other project-based organizations.”

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