

Consistent Methodology and Training Lead to Project Success for PeopleSoft®

ESI SUCCESS STORY

In early 2000, PeopleSoft took the decision to evolve their Global Services organisation so they would be better positioned to support their customers' changing needs. This would involve a move from being primarily a provider of PeopleSoft-specialised technical skills to becoming a provider of best-in-class solutions for customers implementing, upgrading or optimising PeopleSoft products. Mike Barnard, UK Director of PeopleSoft Global Services comments, "Our offerings and services needed to become more sophisticated to mirror the expectations of our customers. We decided that in order to extend our service offering to a full project environment, we would have to restructure our services business and embrace a project management culture. This included establishing a formal project management office to focus on process, tools and adoption of best practise in the implementation lifecycle. We aimed to create standards and to ensure that techniques and methodologies learnt in class were implemented in the real world." One of the biggest challenges faced early on was the change to the organisational culture necessitated by the shift towards a "managing by projects" environment. With the structure aligned to support a project based environment, moving from a functional to a matrix structure brought challenges concerned with allocation

and management of human resources. To facilitate this cultural change, Gary Fitchett, PeopleSoft UK Solutions Delivery Manager, set about further developing the team by recruiting a mixed group of project management professionals from a variety of both IT and non-IT backgrounds. This, he anticipated, would create a critical mass from which to build enthusiasm for project management and kick-start the change in strategy. Recruitment was based on a standard set of criteria including, most importantly, the hiring of those with proven ability to apply the tools, concepts and processes in project environments.

Professional Certification Showcases PeopleSoft's Commitment to Project Management

By implementing a change in capability, PeopleSoft wanted to clearly demonstrate the value this would bring to their customers. "In the IT industry, there has been many publicised reports on project failure versus success rates. This includes numbers of projects that, even when completed on time and within budget, have failed to fully deliver the anticipated business benefit," states Mike. "We decided that to differentiate the PeopleSoft offering through our people, then their skills, competencies and practises needed to be consistent and showcased through suitable professional

Overview

The Issues

- A Corporate strategy decision to move from primarily a technical skills provider to best-in-class solutions provider meant the need to embrace a PM culture
- A need to focus on processes required a need to establish PM best practices
- Need to differentiate and showcase PeopleSoft's offerings in the market through suitable certification

The ESI Solution

- Measure the knowledge and skills of staff through ESI's PMAppraise® assessment and face-to-face interviews
- Devise a clear development path for PeopleSoft staff
- Provide solid PM foundation training for all project staff from which to build subsequent courses.

The Result

- Over 70% of PeopleSoft's solutions now delivered in a project environment
- An increase in staff retention rate has helped build increasingly strong customer relationships
- PeopleSoft now able to offer a variety of engagements and commercial contracts offering terms around risk/reward or fixed price contacts.

certification." After much evaluation, PeopleSoft chose the PMP® certification from the Project Management Institute (PMI®) as the preferred accreditation and decided to align themselves with PMI's Methodology – set down in the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK®). They saw this as the most suitable accreditation that would not only complement their own proprietary project management methodology, Compass, but would also provide them with a global project management standard. In light of the large number of global enterprises who are PeopleSoft customers, a global standard was deemed essential. Thus, in order to assist in the promotional process and support the new company direction, they set a goal of having all project managers within the PeopleSoft UK environment achieving at least PMP® certification.

ESI's Certificate Programme Meet's PeopleSoft's Needs

At this time Mike approached ESI International to assist them in implementing this approach. "We needed to find a partner that could offer us a comprehensive training curriculum and a true global presence in order to maintain a consistency wherever in the world PeopleSoft are based. After extensive research we were convinced that ESI International were the ideal partner for us in this critical programme and embarked on a pilot," says Mike. The initial approach consisted of using ESI International's PMAppraise® assessment tool to measure the knowledge and skill base of existing project staff. This, along with a number of face-to-face interviews, enabled the company's executives to establish a base-line against

which they could set their objectives. With a complete picture of their project management knowledge and skills combined with an understanding of the behavioural competencies critical to project success, ESI and PeopleSoft devised a clear development path for all staff working on projects. Everyone involved in projects across the organisation was required to take one of ESI's flagship courses, Managing Projects, that provides the foundation on which to build subsequent training. Project managers went on to complete ESI's full curriculum in Project Management, awarded by The George Washington University. In doing this they were guaranteed to cover all 10 areas of the PMBOK® and be fully prepared to successfully pass the PMP® Certification Exam.

"Whilst you are learning new tools, techniques and processes you are also building your skills, and practical application in order to apply these to your specific industry. And the project management expertise of ESI rainers has enabled us to directly relate the learning to real life situations."

**Gary Martin,
Project Manager,
PeopleSoft**

Project Success for PeopleSoft employees and Customers

Two years on and PeopleSoft have been able to reflect on the success they have achieved through the initiative. Before the programme, all work undertaken by PeopleSoft Global Services in the UK was traditional skills augmentation. Now, in excess of 70% of services are delivered in a project environment where PeopleSoft Global Services is responsible for project success. This has significantly increased single vendor accountability, which is in turn recognised as offering considerable additional value to PeopleSoft customers. "Since we started this programme our staff retention rate has been excellent, which is something that has helped us to build increasingly strong relationships with our clients" says Gary Fitchett.

One PeopleSoft Project Manager, Gary Martin states, "Since the training it has been a great deal easier to talk confidently with clients at all levels. This has definitely enhanced PeopleSoft's reputation. And with our professional certifications, our clients have been bowled over by our commitment to project management and our ability to demonstrate a structured, consistent approach to their projects." Dave Exall, European IT Director, Bausch & Lomb comments, "Initially, having chosen PeopleSoft software for Bausch & Lomb, we engaged their consultants to implement the project as we felt that they would be the strongest in the field. What became evident was the role of the project manager in the implementation of this project. Their strength and discipline in professional project management meant that we were able to keep a tight control over the project with processes in place to monitor its progress with detailed weekly and monthly status reports. It was a challenging project with tight budgets and timescales, but I always felt that the project was under control. From both a planning and risk management point of view the attention to detail with a strong methodology was invaluable." "Working with PeopleSoft has taught me the importance of project management as a discipline in it's own right," Exall continues. "Having a manager driving a project management methodology keeps the project under control. In future projects I would certainly consider the experience and training of any project manager that we engaged, as a vital criteria in our selection process."

For more information on how ESI International can help your organisation achieve your business objectives through consistent project management practices and processes, call us on +44 (0)20 7017 7100 or visit us online at www.esi-europe.com