

Project management software gets CIOs excited UMT Consulting drives higher project success rates in Alexander Forbes

Project management software usually is not for the faint of heart, but advancements in technology are allowing companies to embrace project management in a more aggressive manner than ever before.

That's the view of Alexander Forbes, chief information officer (CIO), Brad Eliot, who says the face of project management within organisations is changing dramatically as CIOs feel the pressure to do more with less.

EPM (enterprise project management) products help companies collect and make sense of data to assess the status of projects in the business. Once seen as the poor cousins of the IT world, they are now shaking off their once-dowdy image to deliver powerful business benefits, including driving strategic initiatives and improving project success rates.

„The current global recession is placing additional pressure on financial services institutions to have agility in their business and systems,“ said Eliot. „Companies are increasingly relying on software tools to make project information visible and understandable, so that managers and teams can make the up-to-the-minute decisions as an organisation's internal or external conditions change.“

„The bottom line is that EPM helps companies to stay on track with their overarching business objectives by associating projects with the corporate themes they support ^ like increasing market share, optimising profitability or operational effectiveness.“

While these tools have been available for a number of years, they simply haven't been enough. Many organisations have complex projects, happening in diverse locations, starting at different times. And this demand for more integrated planning has resulted in the arrival of a new breed of enterprise solutions, says Albie Bester, who heads the Information Worker division at Microsoft South Africa.

Before Alexander Forbes embarked on its recent EPM initiative, information was stored in various places across the business and project management processes and tools were not standardised. Steven Skolnic, head of the Alexander Forbes EPM Office, says the introduction of EPM has first and foremost ensured the availability of accurate data and reports on all projects.

Working with local project management specialists UMT Consulting SA, the company implemented an EPM system that will align and integrate its project management system with its project delivery framework, processes and templates.

„We're not only able to collaborate with distributed project teams and track resource utilisation, but we are seeing improved project communication and

the ability to manage risks, issues and knowledge about projects in a centralised location,% said Skolnic.

Duncan Barnes, a sales executive for UMT Consulting SA, believes that between 30 and 50 percent of the energy companies expend on projects is wasted through various inefficient processes and poor decisions.

„At Alexander Forbes, internal IT staff and business users are now well equipped to plan ahead. They see each project, who,s working on it, start and estimated finish dates, the current phase of the project, and business hours and costs,% said Barnes.

„For the first time, their senior managers have a holistic view of operations that allows them to save time and money, and rationalise processes.%

For more information contact UMT SA on (012) 345 3518 or visit www.umtsa.co.za

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UMT SA is the largest Project, Program and Portfolio management solutions implementation partner in South Arica and has serviced more than a 100 of the country,s leading organisations with its offerings. UMT SA recently concluded a BEE transaction whereby the Notsi Group owns a 25 percent shareholding in the ordinary share capital of the company. The company is equipped with sound staff values, capacity to deliver on its promise, practical knowledge and it has a BEE partner that actively participates and contributes to the company,s success.

UMT Project and Portfolio Management Services South Africa (UMT SA) was formed through the merger of Fulcrum Business Solutions, South Africa,s leading provider of Enterprise Project Management solutions, and UMT Portfolio Management SA, the leading Portfolio Management organisation.

Since 1989, both UMT and Fulcrum Business Solutions have pioneered the field of project and portfolio management and devised unique methodologies that, when combined with effective project management, enable an integrated link between strategy formulation and execution. UMT SA contributes to its clients' success by linking business and IT strategies to execution through day-to-day activities leading to improved performance and tangible projects delivery results.

UMT SA methodology, training, mentorship and coaching approach assist organisations successfully to deploy practical and essential Project, Program and Portfolio management processes, templates, systems and governance solutions across their multi disciplinary divisions or departments.

UMT SA solutions that consistently help its clients build capabilities that support effective business decision-making and enhances business delivery performance. Its objective is to assist its clients in ensuring the operational

delivery of their strategy through effective project, program and portfolio management.

UMT SA is a Microsoft Gold Certified partner and a Microsoft Project, Portfolio and Sharepoint Server implementation partner.

According to UMT SA CEO Pieter Meyer, the time has passed to just improve on your delivery processes but to introduce a new way of collaborating between team members, program and project managers, senior managers and executives. „Organisations need to enable and revive their processes by introducing a responsibility, accountability, consult and inputs (RACI) formal governance framework to their projects environments and to use work flow that will manage the governance outputs. Role base delivery management methods will become very important in any organisation ensure return on investments in their project delivery space.‰

UMT SA has delivered services and solutions and is currently engaging in the following countries: USA, Uganda, Mauritius, Kenya, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Nigeria, Botswana, Namibia, Dubai, Ghana, United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Brazil.

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