

Vaco Success Story

Challenge

What do you do when you have a critical project being dragged out and you can't seem to be able to "stop the bleeding"? A manufacturing company that was replacing an extremely aged ERP system was facing this very dilemma. The situation was simple - if a 25 year old ERP system goes down, it won't come back up and will shut down operations at two facilities, impacting nearly 40% of the revenue stream. This was one of those projects where the due date was yesterday. To top it all off, the consulting firm that specialized in the ERP system in question, did not see this project as a high priority and was often slow to respond and completed their work with delays. All initial attempts by the senior management to improve the situation had not made much impact and a new solution was needed.

Solution

When a company decides to outsource its project management function to a partner, they trust this partner to deliver when it is needed most. A new project manager needed to be brought in quickly who could change things "on the ground" at a different level of detail than the executive team had capacity to deal with. The right PM was selected for the situation at hand and onboarded in less than two weeks. As it was expected, the root cause of continuous delays was poor understanding of operational processes and how they mapped to the new ERP system functionality. Additionally, the entire project management process was highly administrative requiring the team to spend excessive time in meetings and status updates, rather than doing the "actual work". All of this "turned off" the team from the project and they were, intentionally or not, dragging their feet, working without any enthusiasm.

The new PM quickly took matters into his own hands, redefined the definition of done of the project and key features of the system. Then, the focus shifted on finishing the "to-be" process design. This exercise allowed the team to take a necessary "pause" and re-align on what needed to be done and why. As the design took a nearly finished look, the team had a lot more clarity about the future state. This clarity allowed for requirements to be more clearly defined and the project plan to be reworked, representing the "real" picture.

Results

This rapid infusion of a new leader on the ground was exactly what the "doctor prescribed". The team got engaged, the vendor made the project a priority, finally seeing serious and consistent intent from the company. The project finished four months later, nearly 3 months earlier than previous estimates. While the original challenges left some scars on the team, the turnaround was inspirational and set the tone for other initiatives in the portfolio. All of this because of the right person on the ground at the right time. The trust that the company had in its partner was the foundation for the success that followed. Ultimately, that is what Vaco's Project Management as a Service (PMOaaS) is all about.