

IT Service Management

Good communication is half the battle with ITIL®

In future, West Pharma wants to standardise their IT management even more with the help of the ITIL® V3 guidelines. To ensure a good start, the company has developed a comprehensive communication strategy together with MATERNA and got everyone involved right from the beginning.

West Pharma is a 100% subsidiary of the U.S. American corporate group West Pharmaceutical Services Inc. and employs around 1,700 staff in Europe. With their wide range of products and services, West provides comprehensive support for pharmaceutical and bio-pharmaceutical companies with the development and manufacture of new medicines for the worldwide market. The technologies West uses cover the development and manufacture of packaging components made of

rubber, metal and plastics, the development and manufacture of application systems as well as laboratory and other services. West's international headquarters is in Lionville in the US state of Pennsylvania and supports partners and customers from 50 branches in North America, South America, Europe, Mexico, Japan, Asia and the Pacific area including Australia. The company's IT organisation takes care of over 2,100 users in Europe and Asia, 800 of them in the central office in



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Eschweiler, Germany. These include around 1,000 SAP users and users of PAS-X, a solution for production management. The IT staff have to deal with various topics: the agenda includes numerous IT infrastructure and SAP projects. The whole IT infrastructure is qualified and the applications running on it are mostly validated. In this way the company ensures that the computer systems and the IT-supported business processes satisfy the requirements of different regulations for the pharmaceuticals industry. The “IT Service & Support Team” also supports the users in their daily business.

Establishing service culture with ITIL®

Because of their continuous growth, the West Pharma IT has to take care of more and more users and processes. This has led to numerous isolated solutions becoming established. But the IT will still have to be able to react quickly to changes in the future and to avoid further isolated solutions as well. That is why the IT management at West Pharma wants to standardise the IT processes even more. They also need an up-to-date requirements management so that the IT service provided can be aligned consistently to customer needs. A standardised and professionalised IT infrastructure ensures modern IT operations as well as highly available IT services for the long term. In order to be able to fulfil these requirements and to establish a service culture, West Pharma has set up an ITIL® project. They had already had some contact with the de-facto standard ITIL®: together with the University Aachen, West Pharma supported a university thesis entitled “Requirements for an organisation structure for the support of corporate wide information systems in internationally active companies on the basis of ITIL®”. “We appreciate cultural differences and deal with them every day because West Pharma has locations in so many countries around the world,” Dr Stephan Lünskens, Manager IT Service & Support, tells us about the beginning of the project. “The thesis prompted us to look at the different cultures, ways of working and different viewpoints.”

Deciding on ITIL® V3 and maturity level analysis

The starting point for the project was for IT staff to take part in an ITIL® Foundation training programme. The project team then identified the most significant processes to focus on: service level management, service catalogue management, service asset and configuration management, knowledge management as well as the operating processes incident, access and problem management and request fulfilment. “We deliberately oriented ourselves to the new ITIL® V3. As we had already implemented change management at another place, it

was not one of the initial focus processes for the ITIL® project,” says Stephan Lünskens.

Together with MATERNA, West Pharma then put on workshops and considered best practices for the different key processes. The core of the whole process was a maturity level analysis which was based on the Service Excellence consulting methodology. This maturity level analysis provides information as to how far the previously established activities at West Pharma correspond to best practices. The analysis revealed basic compliance but the activities were mainly ad hoc. Access management was already well-defined – according to ITIL® this is the process which enables users to access IT services, data and other assets which are suitable for their requirements. It was however, for example, a considerable challenge to consolidate the large number of configuration management databases (CMDB). Information about the selected infrastructure components had previously been handled by West Pharma partly centrally and partly de-centrally. But they were not connected or in tune with each other. West Pharma first of all developed a uniform, comprehensive data model which clearly categorised all the relevant configuration items (CI). In the next step all the previously used attributes from the different CI categories were viewed, checked for relevance and if necessary consolidated.

Communicate professionally with all involved

The internal communications strategy and appropriate stakeholder management are crucial for this sort of project. That means that West Pharma integrated all the people who had a significant interest in enhancing the professionalisation of the IT management right from the beginning and included them in the communication. The consulting team from MATERNA used the Service Excellence methodology in the stakeholder management activities and took all levels of the organisation into account.

“That was a critical success factor,” Stephan Lünskens puts it in a nutshell. “It is also important to find suitable multipliers who are pleased to commit to the project. We then developed a strategy as to how we handle the different stakeholder groups,” Lünskens continues.

The project team created a key presentation for this and other process topics and then presented the ITIL® project to the different organisational units. The focus was on information towards the self conception and purpose of the IT at West Pharma as well as the effective performance of the IT organisation and the “IT Service & Support” unit. The presentation also compares the advantages of a structured procedure with that of an unstructured one. The guidelines for the ITIL® project are presented and the next steps explained so that the dialogue is constantly upheld.

One thing is clear today: Those responsible must continuously inform and communicate in future. Even after the official completion of the ITIL® project, the stakeholder management together with the communication planning continue to be a fixed component of the IT tasks.

Do good and talk about it

As a basis for planning the communication, there were regular meetings within the team, at site level with the department heads, at European level and between the different IT teams, complemented by individual meetings. In this way the IT had discussions with all the technical specialists and with the user departments allowing communications to be established and improved among them all. The four strong ITIL® core team also met on a weekly basis to discuss the project status and to determine direction.

The experts from MATERNA were firmly integrated in the local meetings as well as in the weekly telephone conferences. At the beginning of the local appointments all members of the core team first discussed the current developments and the short and medium term planning. There were then individual appointments on specialist questions with the members of staff responsible in each case in order, for example, to check the service catalogue that had been put together. At these meetings the project team identified synergies between the individual topics. In this way the MATERNA experts were able to align the structure and contents of the service catalogue to the incident categorisation and the previously catalogued configuration items.

As part of the communication strategy West Pharma first of all defined the central communication events which determine the parameters of communication. A checklist is used to support the preparation of communication events. "We initially looked upon MATERNA's suggestion to set up a communication strategy sceptically and wondered if we really needed stakeholder management at all," says Lünskens. But the advantages of a strict procedure quickly paid off. "For example, we determined who we inform when, about what, and in which form. So all those participating were well prepared at meetings and we could discuss the procedures to follow quickly," Lünskens continues.

The first stakeholder presentation was held in front of the marketing director as a test. The 30 minutes planned soon turned into a 90 minute constructive discussion. The team then implemented the feedback from this in its further presentations.

No standing still for communication

It has been clear for some time: IT marketing and stakeholder management at West Pharma are well worth it. The user departments have accepted the initiatives for standardising the IT processes. The project team led by Dr Stephan Lünskens



Advantages of Service Excellence for West Pharma

- Structured approach
- Definitions of prioritised focus processes
- Consistent focus on synergy effects between the focus processes
- Identification and consideration of accompanying processes and functions
- Early inclusion of all relevant stakeholders
- Active planning and controlling of communication has a positive influence on IT awareness

was able to mediate so that the IT now supports the users even better in their work. Being aware of this means the stakeholders enjoy coming to meetings.

Stakeholder management is however a continuous process and not a one-off event. Combined with a well thought out communications strategy it is the key to success for the upcoming ITIL® implementation project. That is why setting up a process portal has been planned on the basis of SharePoint, which is to serve as the permanent visiting card of the IT organisation and as a central information zone for all matters relevant to IT.

We must highlight the fact that the IT is integrated in the core business processes and is not an isolated entity. In this way the project team was able to awaken interest in the process. In the meantime at the German site, at least one member of staff per department is continuously kept informed about the upcoming ITIL® project.

In future, the decisive factor is to really live the processes described and communicated. In future the Lotus Notes-based tools used until now in support will be dropped. The decision for a new tool has not actually been made yet but is being prepared at the moment. "Basically we first want to define the key focus processes and then select the tool," Dr Lünskens explains his view of the continued implementation of the ITIL® project. ■