

Assignment for a Major Metro Client

Introduction and background to the assignment



Our client was undertaking the Project Management Capability Excellence (PACE) programme which was a fundamental and far reaching change effort to bring about significant changes and benefits across all project work carried out by the company.

To achieve this, a new stage gate review process was to be introduced, supported by the necessary deliverable documentation at each stage.

A wide range of information was needed, from various sources, described as 'Product Descriptions'.

The overall PACE programme consisted of 4 'work-streams' with the Design and Engineering work-stream involving the majority of the Product Descriptions. It was this work-stream that Touchstone Renard was asked to deliver during 2008.

Our task

Over 100 Product Descriptions were to be developed for the Design and Engineering work-stream. This provided a new output-based specification of what a project / programme manager would need to produce, including a description of the product and its purpose, the contents, quality criteria and roles and responsibilities.

How we went about it

The project depended upon the Touchstone Renard team of 28 consultants (with a core team of 5) working in close liaison with the client's people, reporting to the Client PACE team on a weekly basis. The assignment demanded changes as the work progressed, so team members had to be flexible.

Best practice from other global organisations was identified and reviewed with a key objective being to improve the governance and control during the full investment lifecycle of projects.

Touchstone Renard's Project Manager ensured frequent communication with the client's senior manager responsible, reacting flexibly to his feedback and taking swift and effective action to work to any amended instructions and change workflow requirements in accordance with needs.

What we achieved and our thoughts on the assignment

Our client needed our help to carry out the assignment but we needed the client's support to enable us to succeed, so that was our starting point. It was essential to establish, build and sustain a trusted and committed relationship between our team and the client's people very quickly and sustain it throughout the assignment, with regular, open, good natured, two-way communication being important.

As with any complex assignment, it was important to keep everyone informed and be clear and open about action to be taken at any time. It was essential for our team to retain the client's confidence in its technical expertise but also to be flexible, reliable and willing, with a good understanding of the part we had to play and complete commitment to the aims and deadlines of the project. A good sense of humour on both sides helped!

In our view, the longstanding relationship that we have enjoyed with our client matured increasingly throughout this assignment.