Mission "PM Excellence" – Professionalising Project Management within T-Systems UK

Walter Sedlacek took charge of the **T-Systems UK Project Management Competence Centre** (PMCC) in April 2008. His mission: the establishment of professional project management according to the Deutsche Telekom AG standard "PM Excellence" and to PMI®. The 40yearold from Salzburg has substantial experience in project management. His last position before joining T-Systems as Head of DSS Factory Austria in 2007 was CIO of General Motors Powertrain Austria.

Walter Sedlacek supervised a variety of international IT projects for the US car manufacturer, including a comprehensive rollout of more than 10,000 standardised desktop systems in six countries. Sedlacek, a Physics and IT graduate who holds an American MBA, also teaches classes in technical and management subjects as a guest lecturer at the Danube University Krems and at a number of vocational colleges. next news spoke to him about critical success factors and pitfalls of setting up a project management office and introducing new project management standards.

Since August 2008, next level consulting has been successfully supporting T-Systems UK with consulting, training and coaching assignments and the implementation of PM Tools.

next news: Mr Sedlacek, where did the idea of professionalising project management with T-Systems UK evolve from?

Walter Sedlacek: On our way in simplifying and changing business processes in order to improve the profitability of our customer projects, we quickly became aware that the standardisation of project management standards and processes and the introduction of temporary organisations would be critical success factors. So, after an analysis and conceptual design project, we started our "PM Excellence Implementation" project in August 2008. The project has been supported by next level consulting from the start.

next news: What are the main steps of the implementation project?

Walter Sedlacek: For organisational improvement, we basically changed to a new business model and built up Project Manager Pools in our factories. In order to accompany the changes within the company, we established a change team and a sounding board – both of them are meeting regularly to design and monitor the changes. We are re-designing our single and multi project management processes, tools & techniques and roles and make them accessible for all employees on a new Microsoft share point server. New tools – a slimmer project workbook for example – are being generated in order to simplify and harmonize our project reporting and to build up a project portfolio controlling. All project managers are trained on the Deutsche Telekom PM standard "PM Excellence", several project managers are being coached.

Mousepad
We also do a lot of marketing – flyers, events, newsletters; a project exhibition is planned in February 2009.

next news: You also set up new structures for the Project Management Competence Centre. What are the main tasks of the PMCC?

Walter Sedlacek: The PMCC will provide processes and structures to enable T-Systems UK to deliver mission critical projects in a cost effective and transparent way. But this will only be possible through highly skilled and empowered staff. So a really important point in my opinion is the development of PM skills and the build-up of structured communication to staff and stakeholders.

next news: Can you name the critical success factors for the implementation of professional project management?

Walter Sedlacek: It's important to gain the acceptance of the project managers, to improve their basic conditions and their "fun factor". So there are three main points. One: Do less and automate what is left! Two: Achieve financial responsibility by empowerment of the project managers! Three: Standardise all project management and portfolio project management structures by exploiting best practice and automation! Apart from that, transparency and a continuous improvement by applying lessons learned play a highly important role in professionalizing project management. In order to achieve that, we, for example, plan to make all the project documentation for all customer projects visible and accessible for everyone on our Microsoft share point server.

next news: Where do you see potential pitfalls?

Walter Sedlacek: In sensitising the people to the cultural change. There are ups and downs in every change process – and you run a high risk in losing the people during the down periods if you don't create awareness for these periods beforehand.

next news: What are your next steps until the end of the year?

Walter Sedlacek: Our main challenge is to standardize our top projects in order to be able to steer and control the T-Systems UK project portfolio, to be able to prioritize and align it to strategy.

Mr Sedlacek, thank you for the interview!