

Case Study

Idemitsu Kosan Co.,Ltd.

Facilitating the use of IT tools through close support with user departments
 Resulting in genuine company-wide productivity improvement

Challenges

- Contribute to productivity improvement of user departments by increasing the use of IT tools
- Carry out an innovation project without stalling even during the COVID-19 pandemic



Results

- Identify the root cause of issues through analytic discussion, then implement a user-based solution plan
- Hold an effective workshop with all relevant parties by taking advantage of the benefits of an online conference system



From left: Takayoshi Sawai (Manager, IT Promotion Section, Information Systems Department, Idemitsu Kosan Co.,Ltd.), Masakazu Shibamoto (Team Leader, IT Promotion Section, Information Systems Department, Idemitsu Kosan Co.,Ltd.), Kaori Iijima (IT Promotion Section, Information Systems Department, Idemitsu Kosan Co.,Ltd.)

"In the past, the main idea was to improve overall efficiency through a unified system. However, just simply standardizing business operations and implementing systems at once does not improve productivity. Rather, it is important to consider the situation and feelings of each employee, select the most appropriate IT tool for each workplace, and set an environment where employees can use IT tools comfortably."

Productivity improvement by the Information Systems Department

Idemitsu Kosan Co.,Ltd. was established as an oil distributor in 1911. As a result of business integration with Showa Shell Sekiyu K.K. in April 2019, the group's sales totaled over 6 trillion yen with over 13,000 employees. There are about 6,400 service stations. In addition to the refinement and sale of petroleum products, it is also engaged in the development of resources such as oilfields and mines, and the renewable energy business. In recent years, the company has developed and manufactured cutting-edge materials such as organic EL materials, too.

The company's Information Systems (IS) Department has introduced a variety of IT tools, including mission-critical systems, an office system, cloud storage, and workflow systems used by employees. However, these tools have not been fully utilized in user departments such as the head office, sales branches and plants. Takayoshi Sawai, Manager of the IT Promotion Section, Information Systems Department, explains the To-Be status of the IS Department;

"Field Innovation" befitting for Idemitsu Kosan

In order to improve user productivity by promoting the use of IT tools, the company has been providing on-site support where members of IT support departments are distributed close to user workplaces since May 2019, in addition to conventional inquiry support. It actively promotes better use of IT on the user side. Still, it was found that the use of IT tools was completely different in each department. Masakazu Shibamoto, Team Leader of the IT Promotion Section, Information Systems Department, said, "For example, the progress of paperless activity, one of our goals, varied from department to department. In some cases, they weren't aware of what tools were available to them in the first place." The company decided to adopt "Field Innovation" to further enhance its support operations and increase user productivity. Sawai explains how this happened. "The concept advocated by

Customer profile

Idemitsu Kosan Co.,Ltd.

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|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Head Office | 2-1, Otemachi 1-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8321, Japan |
| Established | March 1940 (Start of Business: June 1911) |
| Capital | 168.3 billion yen |
| URL | https://www.idemitsu.com/en/index.html |

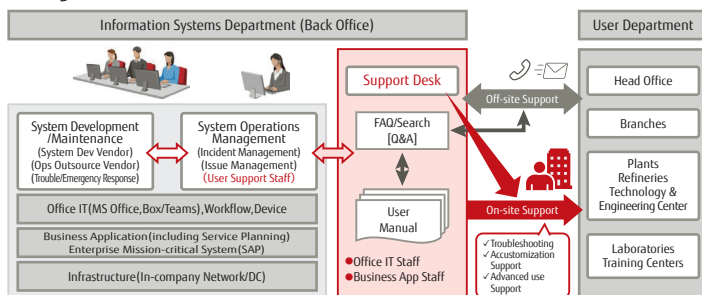
Fujitsu to 'Clarify issues from the viewpoint of field operations and work together with people in the field to make improvements' was very close to what I was aiming for."

In order to grasp the reality of IT tool utilization, as a first step, a user questionnaire was designed in detail, and after the results were analyzed, the important points were extracted together with Field Innovators (Flers). Kaori Iijima, of the IT Promotion Section, Information Systems Department, said, "This was still before the COVID-19 pandemic, so we gathered to discuss the questionnaire items every week by having Flers point out what we wanted to find out through these questions and finally completed them." The total number of responses to the questionnaire reached more than 5,500, which enabled us to grasp the whole picture of user department needs. Sawai said, "We also found that people who had never used support were more dissatisfied. There was a vicious circle in where the more people were dissatisfied with the system, the less people spoke up, thereby becoming even more dissatisfied."

Continuing online workshops during the COVID-19 pandemic

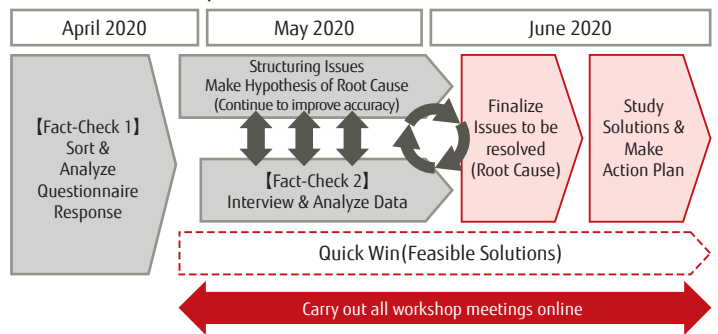
As a result of the questionnaire analysis, the recognition of IT tool utilization and the communication gap became clear. In order to delve deeper into the problem, project members interviewed system staff in support departments and user departments, exploring the root causes of the problem before moving on to the next step and creating a solution plan. Since May, all workshops have been held online. Iijima said, "A little less than 20 people attended at most, and the members who could not participate in the face-to-face workshop in the conference room due to capacity limitations could participate in

Target Business Area



Idemitsu Kosan has a support desk for user departments. In particular, they have focused on on-site support for system utilization.

Outline of Activity



Field Innovation that began with the confirmation of facts through the questionnaire was carried out without interruption from the COVID-19 pandemic through the use of an online conference system.

the online workshop, so there were more opinions."

In this way, three major areas and 25 concrete solutions were selected, and an action plan is now being carried out. Quick win measures have also been implemented, enabling a sequential outcome.

Now, the number of customer calls to the support desk has increased to approximately 4,000 per month compared to 2,000 per month previously. Sawai evaluated this positively. "Contrary to the general idea, we believe the large number of inquiries is proof that support operation innovation has been successful. Users don't have to spend time on FAQs. As a result, the total man-hours required of resolving issues for the entire company will be reduced."

Realizing company growth strategies

"IT tools come into their own by being utilized. If they don't use them, we will try to find out why and provide them with something they can use, which is a matter of course." says Shibamoto as his goal.

Sawai expects that a series of Field Innovations will be part of a methodology to elicit a variety of opinions and suggestions from the field. "If opinions are actively elicited, they will lead to improved company vitality and competitiveness, enabling the organization to become really strong. So, we want to find a way to do that. This time, we believe we have established an improvement process, but are still only halfway. Business is a means to an end, and the real purpose is human growth. Rather than relying solely on technology, I would like to use Field Innovations to create a foundation for human growth."

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