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Frank De Saer, ICT Manager of The Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy.



Customer's Challenge

The Federale Overheidsdienst Economie, KMO, Middenstand en Energie (Federal Public Service Economy, SMEs, Self-employed and Energy) is a Belgian federal government department, established to play an active role in Belgium’s pursuit of an efficient economic policy. As such, it assists in implementing governmental decisions, in protecting consumers, in monitoring the implementation of the Belgian economic laws, in promoting technological knowledge and competitiveness, and in guaranteeing the energy supply for the Belgian economy and its citizens.

Originally, the ICT activities of the FPS were split over two separate data centers, each with its distinct ICT organisation: NIS or “Nationaal Instituut voor de Statistiek”, and CIV, “Centrum voor Informatieverwerking”. In 2002, a major project was set up to merge the two entities in order to get one ICT infrastructure with a uniform architecture, a centralised responsibility and lots of synergies. After the due public tender, Fujitsu was commissioned to implement this migration program called IT Merge. Initially, it was planned to be finalized by the end of 2004, but due to the creation of the KBO, the Kruispuntbank van Ondernemingen (Crossroads Bank for Enterprises), and the additional workload created, an extra year was added.

“The challenges of the IT Merge project were huge”, says Frank De Saer, ICT manager of the FPS. “We were faced with two entirely different ICT infrastructures - different hardware, software, services and even different locations. Merging them not only meant integrating all that, including a physical move, but above all it entailed a change in mentality and culture, both on the ICT and the business side. Fujitsu’s process driven approach has really been instrumental here in developing as smooth a migration path as possible”.

Fujitsu Solution

The project had three basic targets: restructuring and streamlining the organisation, migrating and harmonizing the infrastructure, and installing a service oriented approach. Except for the KBO-episode, everything went as planned. As both platforms used different applications, eventually one of either was chosen for the new, uniform infrastructure. *“The key message here was: try and get as many synergies as possible, both from a management and a cost control perspective”,* De Saer adds.

SUMMARY OF KEY FACTS

Organisation

Federal Public Service Economy
 SMEs, Self-employed and Energy

Contract signing date:

2002

Service/s delivered

- An ICT infrastructure with a uniform architecture.
- Implementation of a migration program called IT Merge.

Key Metrics

- Restructuring and streamlining the organisation, migrating and harmonizing the infrastructure, and installing a service oriented approach

Benefits

- Service oriented approach of the ICT staff
- Service Desk with a list of 10 applications
- Installation of an incident management module for reporting any incidents

CASE STUDY

THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE ECONOMY



Probably the hardest part of the project was the cultural change. *"This was going to be an entirely new way of working, more structured, customer oriented and service driven"*, says Marc De Vogel, Program Manager Fujitsu Services. *"It meant that the business people had to understand the consequences of their demands towards ICT, but at the same time that ICT had to be aware it had to keep its promises towards the business - and that was almost a mental shock for both sides!"*

To keep everything under control, SLAs were introduced, Service Level Agreements. *"With two major benefits"*, says Frank De Saer. *"One, the one hand ICT now, has a contractual basis to negotiate with the business, and on the other hand it forces the business to think about its priorities. The old adage of "the sky is the limit" is no longer valid. When the business people want something new or changed, they must know exactly what it's for and they must be prepared to cooperate with ICT to get results which perfectly match their requirements"*.

Benefits to our Customer

One of the core elements in the new way of working is the service oriented approach of the ICT staff. *"This is entirely new to them"*, De Saer admits, *"It is truly a cultural change. They must now recognize that they are a supporting service with the business people as their main customers. And that means work they must work proactively - send an e-mail to everyone when there will be a temporary interruption of the service, for example. Just like our service desk now has a list of the ten most critical applications - if for example KBO fails, it's all hands on deck to get it up and running again as fast as possible. Fujitsu has also installed an incident management module for reporting any incidents, including interventions and feedback from users, which means we can have a perfect overview and follow-up at all times"*.

With a streamlined infrastructure and all procedures now in place, Frank De Saer feels that it is time to focus on speed and flexibility. *"And there is no lack of business projects"*, he says: *"the contact center, the data warehouse, the intranet, collaborative tools, document management, HRM support - they are all in dire need of upgrading or fine tuning. Apart from that, one of my major challenges now is improving the recurring costs. We have laid the foundations, now we have to see where we can save money, where we can further rationalize our infrastructure in order to reallocate resources for more business projects. We are fortunate that we can still rely on Fujitsu whose no-nonsense, down-to-earth and very pragmatic approach has been extremely valuable to us in developing a sense of realism about what we can accomplish with our new platform"*.

Our Approach

Creating one single organisation was not an easy task apparently as it involved both physically moving everyone and assigning new jobs to a number of people. Fujitsu developed the new organisational structure and assisted the FPS in selecting the proper people for the job. In essence, they acted as a change enabler between the FPS and the employees. Their approach was rather atypical: they organized a large kick-off meeting right at the start of the project with all of the ICT staff, to explain the whole process. And they made sure that the trade unions were involved to minimize any resistance to change. Open communication, one of the core elements in Fujitsu's Change Realisation methodology, was also key here. According to people involved in the roll-out, Fujitsu's role in this entire process is probably best defined as the "facilitator" in the transition towards the new organisation.

Our Expertise

Based on the ITIL principles, Fujitsu developed a whole new infrastructure. *"We now have a fully redundant system with two mainframes connected via Sysplex technology with full load balancing"*, De Saer adds. *"The result is an excellent configuration with two data centers turned into one big virtual structure - which is really far beyond our original objectives and expectations. Having such a solid infrastructure will enable us to tackle projects we would never have dared to in the old days. And it has allowed us to deploy KBO in a proper fashion - which would have been impossible with two separate data centers lacking the current synergies"*.

Because it has now entered its next phase, Frank De Saer decided to change the project's name to Profit, which stands for Professional IT. *"For psychological reasons mostly"*, he explains. *"We had our final kick-off in February 2005, and now it is mainly a matter of fine tuning and rolling out additional smaller projects, both technical and business-like. Mind you, all is still based on the same methods and best practices that Fujitsu introduced - the project based method of working is now one of the core elements in all of our business process re-engineering efforts. What's more, the SLA concept has even found its way into pure business matters where no ICT is involved such as agreements between the business and the contact center!"*

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