Technological innovation for the Publishing of the Future

Within the framework of the three-year restructuring and development plan for our Client, an important publishing house, PRAXI has helped adapt the information systems to the new organisational model, by introducing technological solutions able to guarantee flexibility and rationalise how processes are carried out.

The strong synergies between Praxi Organisation and Praxi Information Technology have allowed for a profound grasp of all the problems connected to the project (strategic, organizational, managerial, technical-operational), exercising just the right amount of control over change management (communication, engagement, education and training).

Project

In order to equip the Publishing House with flexible IT platforms that can easily be adapted to the specific characteristics of school publishing, the project followed the step described below:

sharing of corporate strategies with the Management, in order to determine the priorities, the areas where intervention is required and the sourcing policies

implementation, in parallel, of the following software choices:

• Integrated management system (Microsoft AX): the choice was made taking account of the size and the business context of the Publishing House. Microsoft AX made it possibly to rapidly activate the basic functions (accounting, orders, invoicing, etc.) and to customize the distinctive functions of the Publishing House (commission, authorship rights, adoptions). The management system is linked to a CRM platform (also integrated with the publishing system), for the centralized management of schools, teaching staff, licensees, course participants, registered internet users, etc.)

• Publishing System: the publishing platform has made it possible to: 1) standardise the activities and interface the page layout tools already adopted (Xpress InDesign); 2) link up a Digital Asset Management (DAM) system for filing and managing material; 3) manage a workflow for controlling work processes; 4) interface the content management platform for the websites and for eCommerce

• Rapid analysis and process review (Business Process Reengineering) and gap analysis regarding the platforms chosen

• Configuration and creation of new integrated systems.

As regards the application and technological architecture, the choice of the Microsoft AX platform made it possible to develop a plan for progressing towards a standard market solution and to customise the specific functions of the Publishing House (websites, commission, authorship rights, data analysis, etc.).

PRAXI created a vertical module – in a Microsoft AX environment – specifically for the management of Publishing Orders with an approval module via iPad (APP workflow approval).

Decoupling the back end from the front office also made it possible to reduce the applications required by evolving business processes (new business models, on-line, eCommerce, etc.).

Results

The results obtained have made it possible to:

- turn the ICT department from a simple supplier of services "upon request" to an active support for the Management in the implementation of corporate strategies

- implement a pro-active role for the Information Systems, gradually equipping them to suggest qualified technological solutions/opportunities for the various business areas and for the Company

- introduce or consolidate demand management roles within the ICT department, able to understand the requirements of the business and turn them into IT projects

- create, within the work groups, a guideline for the management of the project that allows objectives to be achieved with the quality levels provided for and in accordance with the times and costs established

- implement a training and professional development plan coherent with corporate strategies and in line with the appropriate technological and application standards

- streamline and speed up the times required to carry out the activities

- improve the in-house processes relating to user support and dealing with suppliers.

Forthcoming developments

With a view to rationalising costs and increasingly concentrating the Publishing House activities into publishing itself, the progressive outsourcing of the information systems is currently being evaluated.

The application infrastructure developed thanks to the project will allow outsourcing to be carried out in a modular, controlled manner.