

Deltares

Collaboration between four parties enables successful ERP implementation

“The implementation of the ERP project at Deltares is a textbook example of how collaboration really adds value!”

Arie Huisman, CEO, “Be Ready for Change”

The collaboration between four parties with clearly defined roles helped create the right ERP solution in a merged organization with more than 900 users. This gave Deltares full integration between their projects and their finance processes.

After a merger that created an organization of more than 900 users, a need had arisen for a new ERP solution. The task of finding the right solution for the new Deltares organization was handed to Ron van Leeuwen. He sincerely believed that the merger would strengthen the organization as he began to craft an ERP vision.

“I am convinced that the solution we got was the best thing that could have happened under the circumstances,” says Ron van Leeuwen enthusiastically.

“It may seem strange from the outside that we have worked on this project with several external parties, but that’s not how we see it. On the contrary, I think it has contributed to a successful project. Making sure all participants have clearly defined roles is crucial. The quality assurance and project management support was handled by PricewaterhouseCoopers. Software and content was provided by Maconomy, and the e-learning company “Be Ready for Change” took care of communication and wider support within the organisation.

All three parties are highly professional and understand their roles,” adds Ron Van Leeuwen.

Introduction

In October 2007 Ron van Leeuwen started working on the project. “I needed to manage the selection,

implementation and delivery of a new system for the merged organization. My job was to integrate financial management and project management. This meant we needed to gather the right information from management.

Due to the complexity of the project we decided to rely on advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers throughout the process.”

Maconomy

“Under the hood Maconomy is really an integrated project and finance system. It is robust and offers less freedom than for instance Microsoft. Also, as an organisation Maconomy showed us that they really appreciated the fact that we might be a client of theirs. They stressed that their management in Copenhagen was willing to get involved if needed. This short line of authority is a great asset.”

Full satisfaction

“We started in April 2008. Within one year we had implemented the solution based on the project scope. PricewaterhouseCoopers had the right focus and we had the right control mechanisms in place. If you have a project plan and your scope and milestones are not clearly defined, you almost always get it wrong. The procurement process was not in the scope at this time. We knew this would come in the second phase, which we have now launched.”

“Looking back at the first phase, we should have involved more project managers from our own ranks in gathering the right management information. It was a massive accomplishment to complete the first

phase. The system was implemented very cleanly. Under the hood it runs perfectly and offers our project managers a great overview.”

Striving for improvements

“I think the procurement module of Maconomy still needs to be improved. The procedures of the entire financial setup should be clearer. And there should be more transparency.”

“But we’re working together with Maconomy to resolve this issue. Maconomy was sometimes a bit hesitant. Sometimes a professional organization like Maconomy should put its foot down a little more and take a clear position.”

“Fortunately, this has already improved, but it’s still a concern. At the headquarters in Copenhagen they are working hard and we are very pleased with that.”

Roles

“It might seem strange to outsiders that we work with multiple external parties, but that’s not how we see it. However, I think this contributed to the success of the project. Having clearly defined roles for all participants was crucial. The quality assurance and project management support was the responsibility of PwC. The software, the content and the structure was managed by Maconomy, and “Be Ready for Change” handled communication and support within the organisation. These three companies are highly professional representatives of their industries.”

Pre-requisites for success

“It comes down to the staffing of the involved parties and the chemistry between the people. Are they enthusiastic and eager to get started? Do they trust each other and are willing to learn from each other? There was and still is a lot of mutual respect.”

“What I find amazing is that all the stakeholders still had to work with the consequences of the merger, which is always difficult. We had to keep the merger in mind and we managed to solve all tasks to perfection. I was very satisfied with the complete integration between projects and finance. This was one of the main reasons why we selected Maconomy.”

Learnings

“All the project phases were skilfully completed. The parties had a very proactive approach to their work. The few things that did not go well should not divert the focus from all the things that were accomplished. Complete your tasks and begin a new phase. Make sure to communicate well so everyone is aware of the status. And keep it formal. Do not let phase 1 automatically flow into phase 2 as this will make it harder to maintain full control. These are very important lessons for us,” says an enthusiastic Ron van Leeuwen.

PricewaterhouseCoopers

PricewaterhouseCoopers looks back with great satisfaction on the selection and implementation of the ERP solution at Deltares. “I cannot stress this enough: it’s very important to maintain a clear focus and make sure people don’t think we can do everything at once. That’s why is this project became a success,” say Maarten Broekhuizen and Mark Tesselaaar from the Department of Systems & Process Assurance at PwC.

Contact to Deltares

“Through our research and reporting selection methodology we got in touch with Paul Viera and Ron van Leeuwen from Deltares. They had a merger scheduled for late 2007. In March 2007 we joined the project because of our extensive experience in selecting ERP solutions.”

“They had four systems with a variety of applications. We were informed of their demands and wishes. We spoke to many stakeholders and performed a thorough analysis. We also considered where the organization is headed and what software might help them achieve their goals. The solution should also be able to account for future growth.”

Shortlist

“We divided the ERP solution selection criteria into five different areas. Additionally, we explicitly looked beyond these rigid criteria. Then we advised Deltares to look at a number of vendors in addition to its

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*Ron van Leeuwen,
Project Manager, Deltares*

“Maintain a clear focus and make sure people don’t think we can do everything at once!”

Mark Tesselaar, Director of Systems & Process Assurance, PwC

existing solutions. We prepared an extensive list and clear selection data as we talked to the vendors.

“In the end we narrowed it down to a shortlist of three vendors. This is where things got more detailed and based on functionality as we developed a demo script. This required a lot of insight into specific ERP solutions and the processes of the organization. It is sometimes difficult, because people will often pay more attention to a process that doesn’t work rather than the large number of processes that do work.”

PricewaterhouseCoopers about Maconomy

“We brought Maconomy in. Maconomy scored particularly well on the human aspects. From the beginning we had a special connection with the specialists from Maconomy. They were very approachable and understood the situation of Deltares without losing sight of the end result.”

“They are real experts in the field of project-based organizations. They asked good questions and they know what’s going on. Maconomy was slightly more expensive than the other providers. The solution is delivered entirely by one project-based vendor. And it was nice that the executives at Maconomy’s headquarters in Copenhagen were fully committed to the project as well.”

Decisive factors

“On aggregate, Maconomy was the strongest vendor. As for the variety of functionality they were not primarily distinctive. But they differentiated themselves in terms of developing their product and displaying project knowledge and the right understanding. That together convinced us.”

Standard solution

“Maconomy’s ERP solution has extensive functionality and can be customised. It has the power of customization while still being a standard solution. Many choices are possible and virtually every wish can be realized. This leads to a manageable aggregate solution as opposed to customized separate units. That really requires scalability.”

Stuck to the theme

“We are proud that we stuck to the theme. Our advice for others? Don’t get distracted and stay true to your original idea that you mapped out during the selection process. Fulfil those goals. That is absolutely imperative. We are also very pleased with the role of “Be Ready for Change” in the implementation process. That should not be overlooked.”

People-oriented

“Maconomy has proven to be a people-oriented organization, though somewhat unstructured. The support from the headquarters in Denmark was quite impressive. They really put a 100% effort in for project-oriented organizations. And they develop their solutions exclusively for these organizations.”

High-quality deliverables

“When you work on a very complex project, value must be added in several areas. We were close to the execution, so we were able to inspect the quality of the deliverables. This enabled us to keep the project on the right track. We also had a good definition of roles and we had great support from the Deltares management.”

“The e-learning consultants from “Be Ready for Change” really understood our needs and Maconomy had the right software solution. In this process we defined our value by continuously keeping the right focus with particular emphasis on quality control. All business KPIs were achieved. There was adequate room for us to provide feedback and advice. They were very good at paying attention and doing all the basic things right in order to ensure a successful project,” concludes Mark Tesselaar.

Be Ready for Change

Motivating 900 users to start working on a new ERP solution is no easy task. That’s why the project group – with specialists from Deltares, PricewaterhouseCoopers and Maconomy – came to Arie Huisman, Director of “Be Ready for Change”,

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for assistance. This turned out to be a wise move. The contribution from “Be Ready For Change” has been widely praised at Deltares and definitely helped ensure a successful implementation of the Maconomy solution.

Web-based training

“If you want to train and motivate some 900 people for a new system, it’s essential to make sure they have enough insight into the needs and the requirements of the project,” says Arie Huisman.

“It’s also a good idea to talk to the users in advance. Perhaps you can determine where potential bottlenecks may occur. We developed web-based training courses to give the users a quick overview of the basic functionality. This included time registration, collecting declarations and providing insight into projects.”

A critical eye

“We were also dealing with the internal communication around the project. Keep in mind that Deltares is the result of a merger. In their previous companies everyone was familiar with their usual systems. Whether you like it or not, many people kept a critical eye on how the transition to the new system went. It was indeed used in a certain way to work. Change is always accompanied by anxiety and uncertainty.”

“And let’s face it. Of course this project was launched to improve the organization as a whole, but we cannot deny that in some instances the situation of the users improved as well. And I am not talking about the feeling. That means you have to respond.”

One chance

“Besides setting up the training we have compiled a database with the most frequently asked questions, and we helped set up a helpdesk as well. When the organization is well-prepared, you can prevent a lot of confusion and irritation. You only get one chance to make a good first impression. Make sure you do your best and are ready to show the users that you prepared the best possible service for them.”

Customized for project-based organizations

“The advantage for us is that Maconomy has a stable solution with a solid core. It is not the best-looking solution, but it’s second to none when it comes to managing project-based organizations. There is a strong integration with the financial management module and the product has a lot of good features.”

“What I appreciate about the people of Maconomy is that they know their weaknesses. They were very positive and open-minded because they recognized that we would be an important part of the project. It really says a lot about them that they saw the collaboration as an opportunity and not as a threat.”

Great endorsement

“The web-based courses were very well received by users. In a short period of time nearly 900 people followed the training. The users liked the comprehensive support with the use of screenshots.”

“Of course it was mandatory to follow the training, but we still needed to motivate people to complete the training. That is what their own colleagues did when they started in the first place. We couldn’t ask for a better endorsement than that,” says a smiling Arie Huisman.

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