

A FORSYTHE CASE STUDY

IT Infrastructure Alignment Assessment

An International Manufacturer

Business Challenge

An international manufacturer was planning to roll out an ERP application that would integrate its financial reporting and operations with its shop floor applications. It had just chosen a vendor, but still had several major decisions to make regarding how best to deploy the application and on what platform. To complicate matters, the company's European and North American data centers operated on different IT standards. Cost was a major consideration, but secondary to the effectiveness of the new environment as a whole.

Solution

Forsythe gathered information from the IT teams at both data centers to create a complete picture of the company's current trans-Atlantic IT environment. With this information in hand, Forsythe performed a due diligence review of the IT infrastructure requirements and the associated real costs of deploying the vendor's ERP solution. Forsythe also evaluated the manufacturer's current areas of IT infrastructure and platform expertise against the ERP vendor's platform and configuration options.

Based upon its review, Forsythe provided the manufacturer with insight into the pros and cons of the vendor's different platform options. It was determined that the best solution for their current environment was to standardize on a more robust platform. Although this option would require a greater initial investment, it would pay for itself in terms of reducing future risk of unplanned downtime.

Forsythe also determined that the initial budget outlined for the project had understated the total real IT infrastructure costs. It omitted several critical deployment requirements—and the associated expenses—such as the servers and software required to underlay the ERP application and network upgrades necessary to provide sufficient bandwidth for satisfactory application performance. Once these costs were shown, it became clear that the more technically robust platform choice was also more economical.

Results

The complete, detailed, realistic picture Forsythe provided enabled the manufacturer to identify the steps necessary to prepare its IT environment for a successful ERP rollout; calculate the real, total costs of these steps; and adopt a rollout budget and schedule that took these into account. Forsythe also helped the company's European and North American operations standardize on the most cost-effective, supportable platform for the organization as a whole.

Most important, by helping the manufacturer avoid a costly mistake in platform selection and recognize all the steps required prior to application deployment, Forsythe enabled the company to prepare for a successful, cost-effective ERP rollout. In fact, having realized the magnitude of the project, the manufacturer has decided to begin with a pilot rollout of the new ERP application. It will draw upon the findings of this pilot to further refine its overall deployment strategy.

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