



# Dynamic Technologies Ltd

From Chaos to Control

## Case Studies of In-line Development

### Case 1

#### Customer size and sector

Market-leading Welfare to Work provider

#### Type/scale of projects

A programme to update the IT support for the business to introduce new technologies and much higher levels of automation, with the challenge of delivering it all within 6 months.

#### Size and background of development group

One programme manager, one solutions architect, one lead business analyst.

#### Reason for in-line development and challenges faced

None of the team were performing at the level needed for delivery as they were all new to the role and still shaking down into their roles.

The delivery plan was challenging, and the real challenge was a poor working relationship between the IT Department and the rest of the business that was resulting in perceived failure whatever was done.

#### Duration of in-line development

7 months - cost £10000.

#### Approach

Weekly workshops and ad hoc telephone calls focussing primarily on stakeholder management, communications, planning then rigorous risk and issue management.

#### Key areas covered

Stakeholder management, interpersonal skills, communications, product-based planning, Risk management, delay avoidance.

#### Outcome

The project went live on time with high levels of customer satisfaction due to good expectation management. In-line development cost - £20000.

The CIO was pleased with the development they'd received and felt it was a substantial contributor to the success of the programme.

### Case 2

#### Customer size and sector

FTSE 100 Utilities company.

#### Type/scale of projects

Single £1.3M data warehousing development project. Project was heavily dependent on third parties for infrastructure upgrades and testing. High levels of uncertainty and delay from third-party suppliers.

#### Size and background of development group

One project manager, graduate, trained by a management consultancy.

#### Reason for in-line development and challenges faced

Project manager was provided by a supplier but was under-performing in a very challenging project environment - areas requiring improving were too specific and timescales too short for conventional training.

The new system needed to deliver interactive performance from a data warehouse. This requirement was implicit but had NOT been recognized. A change in test approach was essential to ensure adequate response performance. Performance testing was introduced and showed some functionality was too slow, so the code was reworked.

During the project, there were changes in strategy by the infrastructure provider leading to uncertainty, substantially less processing power being made available and delays in storage provision, requiring contingency plans to satisfy the customer.

#### **Duration of in-line development**

4 months - cost £5000.

#### **Approach**

Weekly workshops and ad hoc telephone calls; rigorous risk and issue management through logging, review and planning; weekly review of options for avoiding slippage and cost overruns.

#### **Key areas covered**

Risk management, delay avoidance, cost over-run avoidance, identifying undocumented specifications

#### **Outcome**

The project went live on time, £250,000 under budget with high levels of customer satisfaction. In-line development cost - £5000.

Project manager was initially reserved about in-line development, but on completion freely admitted that he'd learned a lot and was highly amused when one of his colleague's projects ran into huge problems through lack of performance testing!

## **Case 3**

#### **Customer size and sector**

Medium-sized mutual Life Insurer

#### **Type/scale of projects**

103 projects in total, from major software development projects to small scale systems testing. Overall budget for programme £9M.

#### **Size and background of development group**

40 business line managers.

#### **Reason for in-line development and challenges faced**

The FSA required a compliance programme across the whole business - failure to comply would put them out of business. Previous centralized efforts having failed, it was essential that the business owners owned and managed the compliance project in their areas to deliver on time, within budget and to required quality standards. It was impossible and inappropriate to train all of these managers in general project management skills for a single programme, so they had to be brought up to a basic competence for their projects while still doing their "day job".

#### **Duration of in-line development**

18 months overall, approx 3 months per individual.

#### **Approach**

Designed project management approach, quality system and reporting to be as simple and straightforward as possible.

Initially briefed the complete group to ensure their understanding and motivation.

Planning workshops with each project manager

Weekly progress reporting, followed by coaching on managing any issues arising.

#### **Key areas covered**

Planning,

Quality Assurance

Delay avoidance/management

#### **Outcome**

In-line development of the temporary project managers meant the programme delivered on time and £3M under budget and was seen as a huge success, praised by the FSA. One of those project managers is now Programme Manager for another life assurer.

This approach was then repeated for a New York-based investment management company, and due to an improvement in techniques and smaller systems base was successfully completed in only 5 months

## Case 4

### Customer size and sector

Specialist division of a large international railway engineering group.

### Type/scale of projects

Replacement/repair of railway infrastructure, typically £1M - £30M

### Size and background of development group

Phase 1 - 1 professional project manager, 2 engineers promoted to PM role

Phase 2 - 6 staff, mixture of professional PMs and engineers

Phase 3 - 1 project manager.

### Reason for in-line development and challenges faced

The corps of project managers were so busy that there was no time to send them on further training courses. Their development had to deliver immediate payback on their current workload. Some of them were very experienced and would not consider further training, and were reluctant about in-line development.

Major issues were recurrence of problems and lack of commercial focus from the project managers

### Duration of in-line development

Phase 1 - 5 months

Phase 2 - 6 months

Phase 3 - 4 months

### Approach

I worked with them individually and as a group to identify the problems they were facing then implemented the relevant disciplines to sort those out.

This involved group "surgeries" and one to one discussions (initially weekly then falling to monthly as the situation improved) complemented by telephone sessions.

### Key areas covered

Risk and issue management, especially the use of the risk register to prevent the recurrence of issues.

Commercial management fundamentals in the project environment

Stakeholder management and interpersonal techniques

### Outcome

Through effective risk management, the rate of recurring issues fell steeply and profitability rose. One of the project managers was on the verge of dismissal - this work turned him round and he's now Head of Project Management!

One of the project managers realized that his lack of enthusiasm (hence under performance) was because he was in the wrong job and moved on to a role he was a lot happier with.

## Case 5

### Customer size and sector

Major High Street Bank

### Type/scale of projects

The FSA required a compliance programme across the whole business - failure to comply would put them out of business. The projects were rolling out systems, training and processes across 1000s of staff nationwide. Programme budget c. £20M.

### Size and background of development group

One fast-track young manager and 2 junior project managers responsible for business readiness.

### Reason for in-line development and challenges faced

This programme was running very late and the compliance deadline was only 3 months away.

Fast-track manager needed to perform short-term in this project management role but had little formal PM training. As he wouldn't remain as a PM and his immediate workload was high, it wasn't appropriate to send him for formal training. The junior project managers were working to a tight deadline and they had no time to go on training courses.

#### **Duration of in-line development**

3 months - cost £6500

#### **Approach**

Introduced daily risk and issues review sessions, with the focus on eliminating delays, given the hard deadline.

Reviewed processes and requirements from programme office and negotiated simpler and less onerous reporting

Reviewed planning and worked with programme office and project managers to implement PRINCE2 standards of hierarchical plans, making the plans maintainable and accurate.

Worked with project managers to implement progress tracking tools following the training of 7200 staff in over 2000 sites so that it was clear whether training would be sufficient before the deadline.

#### **Key areas covered**

Risk and issue management

Planning

Accurate progress tracking

#### **Outcome**

**In-line developing the team in project management disciplines helped them to recover the slippage and pre-empt issues before they occurred, delivering 100% business readiness on time.**

**The techniques were then carried over to the next project in the programme, which was equally successful.**

## **Case 6**

#### **Customer size and sector**

Alternative Retail Telecoms supplier

#### **Type/scale of projects**

Urgent "get well" project.

#### **Size and background of development group**

One project manager and 2 operations managers.

#### **Reason for in-line development and challenges faced**

Customer service queries by e-mail had a poor SLA of 48 hours anyway, yet were handled so badly that a 2 week backlog had built up. The Board had decided that serious investment in new technology was needed to cure this, aiming to improve performance by 33% in 6 months.

#### **Duration of in-line development**

2 months.

#### **Approach**

Worked with the project manager to convene and run a series of internal workshops to understand the process in detail and the bottle-necks.

Worked with the project manager to convene workshops to do impact analysis of the solution proposed, which had major adverse impact on the change programme. Helped identify major constraints not already understood.

Worked with the project manager and operational managers to generate alternative solutions and evaluate them, then mentored their planning of the preferred solution implementation.

#### **Key areas covered**

Requirements management

Problem solving techniques

Solution exploration and evaluation

Planning

#### **Outcome**

The performance improvement target was achieved in 1 month without the investment or disruption to the change programme. The backlog was cleared in 2 months at negligible cost.

All the managers concerned were stunned that they could transform the situation so easily and felt empowered to tackle any problem in the same way.

## Case 7

### Customer size and sector

Major B2B Telecoms supplier

### Type/scale of projects

Portfolio of assorted system developments, c. £5M p.a.

### Size and background of development group

Development manager and his team.

### Reason for in-line development and challenges faced

This manager had no project management experience and prioritized his development team on a “who shouts loudest” basis. Faced with the need to support a major strategic project, his approach didn’t cope with the rapid scaling up of pressures - he was unable to plan and deadlines were missed repeatedly, throwing the major project into uncontrolled slippage. There was serious reluctance by the manager to accept his approach had to change - this was overcome by direction from Board level.

### Duration of in-line development

3 months.

### Approach

The aim was to arrive at a plan that would deliver key capabilities at the target dates, then track progress against that plan and maintain it accurately. This was achieved by a single planning workshop to produce the bare bones of the plan then weekly coaching sessions to develop and update the plan.

### Key areas covered

Planning and scheduling

### Outcome

Over 3 months the delivery from this team quickly became more reliable and the major project that depended on it came back under control, remaining there for the remaining 6 months of the project.