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PTC Improves Customer Satisfaction Through Global Project Management

By J. LeRoy Ward, PMP, PgMP

About PTC

One of the world's largest, independent software companies, Parametric Technology Corporation (PTC) provides product development systems that deliver the key capabilities manufacturers need to realize more value from product development. Their proven software solutions help companies accelerate adoption, minimize risk and speed time-to-value. PTC has 5,000 employees in 30 countries around the world, and serves more than 50,000 customers. Headquartered in Needham, Massachusetts, USA, PTC is a publicly traded company, with revenues of almost US\$1 billion.



The Challenge

Like virtually every 21st century organization, PTC understands that in order to maintain its competitive edge in the global marketplace it must consistently improve project success rates, increase customer satisfaction and maximize efficiencies. PTC's leaders recognized that as the company had grown from its founding in 1985 — organically and through acquisition — standards for project management had self-developed in regional isolation around the world. This disparate approach to project management was identified as a barrier to maintaining the company's leadership position. Development of a global project management program encompassing standards, processes and career paths became a key corporate goal beginning in 2003.

In order to realize this goal, PTC needed to address project management on several fronts:

- Create a global project management community managed by PMO leads on the country, theater and global level
- Define the consistent project management methodology
- Document the knowledge, role and responsibilities for various steps in the project manager career-path ladder
- Identify and teach global best practice methods and tools
- Bridge global language, cultural and time gaps

The Solution

PTC leadership determined that in order to accelerate the transition and ensure the program delivered maximum ROI the first time around, strong leadership from internal and external resources were needed. PTC chose ESI International for its understanding of PTC's business,

its global reach and its reputation for outstanding customer service. Together ESI and PTC developed and implemented a three-stage, worldwide initiative.

1. Assessment and Planning

Using ESI's proprietary *PMAppraise: A Knowledge and Skills Assessment*®, PTC was able to benchmark its overall project management competency against the nine areas of the Project Management Institute's *A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide)*. With the needs clearly defined, PTC and ESI designed a program to:

- Set the standard for PTC's professional community of practice
- Define competencies by job level/title
- Provide the right professional development opportunities
- Create incentives for project managers tied to professional development as well as project and company performance
- Identify global standards of delivery excellence

2. Communication and Execution

Understanding the essential role executive leadership plays in ensuring the success of any global effort, PTC launched the program with a worldwide kick-off that included a strong showing from senior management.

The courses supporting these paths are delivered through both on-site and online training methods. Regardless of where or how courses are taken, they are consistent everywhere in the world.

3. Reinforce

In order to encourage its employees to continue their project management-focused professional development, PTC and ESI deployed a number of incentives. For example, project management progress and training are now standard elements of an employee's annual review. Also, PMP® certification is required for promotion to the program manager and program director levels and employee compensation is directly tied to project performance.

To ensure that the knowledge and skills gained in training are retained and applied on the job, ESI helps PTC provide employees with a suite of online reinforcement tools. In addition, PTC has launched a coaching program in which experienced project and program managers coach other employees based on best practices from the training program. A well-defined methodology and framework (the Realized Value Platform) with an effective project lifecycle (Realized Value Project Lifecycle) based on a comprehensive set of quality assurance processes and tools applied at certain milestones in each project assures a continuous tracking of compliance to the high-quality standards of PTC. Project progress and performance is measured based on earned value management and reviewed on all management levels.

“Today there is much more awareness of project management throughout the organization and especially a high sponsoring of the PMO by the senior and executive levels of managements. We’ve built the first-ever community of project managers at PTC.”

Dr. Clemens Woelfinger, PMP
Vice President Global PMO,
Strategic Services & Partner
PTC

Results

Improvements in project management are delivering the full range of benefits. First and foremost is increased customer satisfaction being driven by improvements in product delivery. This is reflected in recent customer satisfaction results as well as internally by improved project margins through better project estimations and managing projects to scope, schedule and budget by professional project management standard processes and tools. Additionally:

- Almost half of all PTC project managers are now PMP® certified (80-90% of all eligible project managers)
- Employee turnover has been reduced, with employee surveys documenting the project manager training and career paths as key contributions
- Across the board improvements in all areas assessed by the benchmark *PMAppraise*®
- Improved hiring of project managers, attributable to higher standards as well as PTC’s increased level of project management maturity.
- Finally, the global project management effort has resulted in the first PTC global workforce community at both formal and informal levels. This has created the standard for how to build similar communities for other disciplines within the company.

Next Steps

With the right infrastructure in place, PTC is continuing to mature its project management capabilities — both organizationally and for individual team members — through training, assessment and coaching.

For more information, visit www.esi-intl.com.

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International, a global learning company helping people and organizations improve the way they manage projects, contracts, requirements and vendors. Complementing a 17-year career with four U.S. federal agencies, Mr. Ward is responsible for, among other things, ESI's product offerings worldwide. He is a noted author and speaker and appears frequently at project management gatherings around the world. <http://www.esi-intl.com>.