

CASE STUDY: FROM BROADSHEET TO TABLOID

The Client

EDITRICE La Stampa, one of Italy largest and most respected newspapers. Based in Piedmont and printed and distributed nationwide.

La Stampa's main editorial offices and printing press are in Turin. For nationwide distribution, they rely on a network of 6 external printers and a large number of distribution channels.

Like most newspapers, La Stampa is a process based company with little experience in project management.



The Project

Following the worldwide trend, La Stampa is changing their newspaper format from broadsheet to tabloid.

The new format will be much easier to handle and read by the end users and will be printed in full colour.

In order to complete the project, La Stampa needs to change their entire printing press and plate room; update their mailrooms, warehouse and all supporting auxiliaries; modify the factory building accordingly; modify their IT publication infrastructure and workflow; and make sure that all their external printer perform their own modifications accordingly in order to meet the published deadline of 19 November 2006 as the release date of the new format.

The Challenge

To establish an infrastructure and methodology to plan, support and control the project in order for La Stampa to meet its deadline of December 2006 for the release of the new newspaper format within budget and to specification.

Support is to include full coordination with all the 6 external printer and the various suppliers of the project.

The challenge is added to by the professional and geographical diversity of the suppliers including:

- Rotary press supplier based in Switzerland
- Mailroom supplier based in Switzerland
- Plate room supplier based in Germany
- Workflow IT suppliers based in Sweden and Switzerland
- 1 main Contractor and 4 sub-contractors for the modification of the factory building

It is also to be noted that the change of printing press and/or newspaper format usually takes place once every 15-20 years. This means that very little experience and lessons learned can be relied on from the previous initiative. This is especially true when considering the fast evolution of technology and methodology which would make most related experience older than 10 years obsolete.

Available Systems

- La Stampa has an intranet network covering all its editorial offices and its printing plant in Turin.
- All PCs have Microsoft Office installed, as well as any other tools required by the user's responsibilities.

The Solution

- Identify the Work Packages of the project and the person within La Stampa that would best fit as leaders of these work packages as based on their *technical* and *leadership* capabilities.
- Develop a project plan for each work package and a master plan identifying all phases of the project and "cross-work package" dependencies
- Implement a "risk and issue database" to immediately start logging and tracking identified risks and issues until their resolution
- Establish a communication strategy between all persons involved from La Stampa and from suppliers as they are assigned.
- Implement Microsoft Sharepoint Services with various users and access rights as the main portal for all project files including all suppliers shared files. The Sharepoint Services is accessible from all La Stampa network and from outside La Stampa network over a Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- Implement Microsoft Enterprise Project Management (EPM) also accessible to suppliers over VPN, and establish it as the main tool for tracking all activities of the project.
- Establish and manage a cost and change control procedure.

- Establish a Project Management Office within La Stampa to carry out and maintain all the above activities as well as support the project team in their new role.

Results

- Full clarity over all parts of the project and activities involved as well as the various responsibilities of the project team.
- Coordination and control of all tasks with the ability of identifying and rectifying delays as soon as they start to occur
- Full track and management of risks and issue throughout the project reducing to a minimum the possibility of fire fighting or being “caught by surprise” in a negative situation.
- Full communication between the project team within and without La Stampa as well as the ability to share and work simultaneously on documentation from various locations.
- Cost control over the project and the ability to verify full impact of specification change prior to authorisation and/or implantation.

Critical Success Factors

- High Management Support for the project setup and the PMO
- Full communication to all involved on the use and benefit of the new project infrastructure
- Comprehensive training to the work package leaders in the effective use of scheduling tools and their added value to the project.
- Regular and defined PMO meetings and project update cycles