

» There were a lot of symbioses between different units - that's why Blue Ant made the running «

The KI group is an IT management consultancy with a passion for Tech & Data as well as innovative and often disruptive IT solutions.

The roots of the KI group go back to 1999. It is now represented at seven locations in Cologne, Stuttgart, Berlin, Munich, Lisbon, Leira and Zurich. The group has around 250 employees, including 170 software engineers.

Based on intensive ecosystem work, KI group helps its customers develop new business models and modern IT strategies and expand digital revenue streams. It also provides conceptual support and implementation of complex IT solutions. [Click here for the website.](#)

We spoke with Benjamin Rossel, Lead Project Delivery, about the introduction of Blue Ant and the successive use of the modules at the KI group.



Case Study

Mr. Rossel, what was the trigger for your company to get involved with project management software? Which optimizations did you hope for?

The growth of the KI group in 2016 led to a colleague and I starting to evaluate suitable software solutions. Our complex Excel solution for our application planning had simply reached its limits. The work-time recording process was a very acute problem at that time. Clear management and recording of the hours worked by our consultants is essential for us, as they serve both as a measure of the success of our projects and are also charged to the customer. Another focus for us was project deployment planning. We did not just want to look at individual projects, but make planning visible across teams and use the resulting data for decision-making.

How many projects do you manage in parallel and with how many staff?

In recent years, we have had an average of about 500 projects of varying sizes per year, which we manage with about 250 internal and external employees. The projects can be a two-day proof of concept or involve several thousand man-days over several years. It varies enormously depending on the nature of the project business.



Benjamin Rossel, Lead Project Delivery, KI group

Why did you choose Blue Ant?

We ranked tool providers by comparing various tools with our requirements in the form of a benefit analysis. All our challenges and requirements were taken into account, including the optimization of project planning, a simple data analysis option and customizing the software. It was important for us to include the different departments in our company and also consider their requirements. For example, we talked to the HR department about the holiday process and the accounting department about the accounting process. Features for compliance with data protection are also kept up to date by the software. So, symbioses between the units developed, which is why Blue Ant came out on top.

How did you introduce Blue Ant?

We took an iterative approach, and in retrospect this proved to be the best way forward. We didn't want to overload our staff or the project business, so we first defined certain processes and functions. We started with resource planning so that we could finally install a full capacity planning module. This meant that, in addition to holidays, staff absences for trade fairs and events, sales assignments, training etc. could be planned. We then introduced the quotation and accounting module, to also be able to handle the entire purchasing and accounting procedure. In the process, BIRT became increasingly important for generating reports from Blue Ant. This was followed by dashboarding with Microsoft Power BI based on our project plans. Our own data engineers were able to provide very good support here. The next step was to use Blue Ant for our expenses management etc.

How did you include training in the introduction process?

My team and I were convinced that the key to success would be involving as many employees as possible. So, we asked all team leaders and project managers about their wishes and requirements. It quickly became clear that we also needed a training concept. So, after each iteration, we have carried out training at the locations and have now developed a concept of tutorials with which we can also reach new colleagues. When we have successfully tested a new Blue Ant feature in our test environment and want to use it in the live environment, the employees and project managers receive further training. Regularly requesting user feedback and measuring implemented measures is also key to the successfully implementing new features and requirements.

To what extent have you integrated Blue Ant in the company using interfaces?

As we have the cloud version, Blue Ant is primarily used via proventis' web interface - this also helps management, which uses the data for business decisions. Of particular interest here are the capacities of the employees, their project reservations and the resulting total workload of a team within a certain period of time. This data is condensed in Microsoft Power-BI and displayed via reports. This works very well. The next step is to map commercial project sizes in Power BI.

We also have an export function to DATEV. This is used by our HR department so that expenses for travel costs in particular can be processed more accurately and quickly.

Have you planned further steps for the future?

In the future, we want to focus even more strongly on full cost control and further optimize billing options. We are also evaluating the introduction of portfolio simulation; we are considering incorporating this into our program management.

What tips would you give for the introduction of Blue Ant?

Set priorities during the introduction and do not overload your colleagues. We do not map every ToDo in the software: software should give us freedom and not force people into a corset that does not fit the DNA of the company or team. So, consider which problems to tackle first, whether a tool is always needed for this and if so, always communicate the added value and the goal of what is to be achieved with the measure.

Draw up a clear rollout plan for yourself. This gives a clear direction, helps you stay on the project path and motivates the entire team, too.

Many thanks for talking to us!