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Based in Wolfsburg and Berlin conceptQ is a quality-oriented IT consultancy for individual software solutions with a focus on methodological consultancy, and requirements, quality and process management. ConceptQ's target group is medium-sized companies in Germany and its neighbouring countries. The company was founded in 2002 and with its 100 qualified experts, serves the complete life-cycle of IT projects, from project analysis to software development and service management. ConceptQ focuses on extremely high quality project implementation. For ten years conceptQ has been combining its experience, quality and methodology to ensure successful projects for its customers.

We spoke to Mr Wulfes about his experience of the introduction of Blue Ant and its benefits for conceptQ.



Case Study

Mr Wulfes what is your position at conceptQ and what is your remit?

I am the Managing Director of conceptQ and I am also responsible for project management.

How would you describe the project landscape at conceptQ?

We carry out projects in which the emphasis is on consultancy and methodology, and also realize fixed-price projects with up to seven-figure project volumes. Similarly, with regard to project resources there are one-man projects over a period of 2-4 months, and other projects which last up to a year and can involve up to 15 members of staff. We have just completed an extensive consultation project for a large investment company. With our support, new technology was introduced and mobile applications

developed, with which our clients were able to reposition themselves on the market.



Mr Wulfes, Managing Director of conceptQ

What are the resource management requirements in your company?

As we are involved in both short and long-term projects, which are in various different phases, professional resource management is a very important requirement for us. We want to maintain a good workload level in our company, which means that ideally staff should not be overburdened with work. In our experience, qualified resources are limited, which means precise resource planning is indispensable. The question of when a resource is actually available and can be planned into the next project is decisive for our project managers and must be shown in a suitable multi-project management tool.

Were you using a different project management tool before Blue Ant?

We were using an internally developed solution. With this we could only do part of what we can now do with Blue Ant. The previous solution mainly comprised the time recording and project billing functions. In the time recording, unlike today, we were not able to immediately allocate the hours worked by a

project member to a project or ticket, see the degree of completion or record estimated work remaining in the system. We didn't have the precise resource and workload planning. Today we can, for example, with the help of absence management in Blue Ant, professionally support the internal reservation process and quickly identify resource bottlenecks.

What were the important criteria for you in the choice of new project management software?

The new software had to include functions which could already be displayed with our internally developed software solution. As well as the traditional project management functions such as appointment and resource planning, we were looking for a software solution which is able to support the whole project cycle right up to billing of the services provided. It had to include more functionality in the areas of budget planning, include absence management and controlling functions such as time and cost recording including reporting. It also had to be possible for it to display time & material, and fixed price projects.

Do you follow a classic or agile planning approach when realizing your projects?

We use both approaches, by which I mean we have tried over and over again to combine them. It is important for us to have certain agility, but having said that, we don't want to completely give up the classic approach. In this respect, Blue Ant is exactly the right tool for us. The innovative combination of agile and classic planning approaches provides us with a simple optimization of our multi-project landscape. The project managers decide from project to project which approach to use. For example,

line activities are shown entirely in agile projects. In this way, heads of department can present project-like structures in Blue Ant and provide realistic capacity planning in the department. We have found that standardized project management methods lead to an increase in project efficiency and a reduction in overall project costs. Blue Ant supports numerous variations of differing project management methods and approaches. The challenge lies in creating a practical combination of the various tools. We are trying to phase out more and more partial aspects of the internal or external service provision and to expand multi-project management to the whole company using Blue Ant.

What was the decisive factor for implementing Blue Ant in your company?

I have already outlined a lot of the reasons. We looked at a lot of project management software solutions. There were some providers who basically met our requirements, but in the end we decided on Blue Ant because it has a clear layout and is easy to use. For our requirements, Blue Ant offers exactly the right mix of functionalities. The assignment of permissions has made it possible to provide each member of staff with precisely the functions they really need.



conceptQ GmbH, Location Wolfsburg, Niedersachsen

A good price-performance ratio and appropriate support and training reinforced our decision.

How many staff currently work with Blue Ant and how many projects are running concurrently?

Just under 100 staff currently work with Blue Ant. At the moment we are working on 30-35 parallel projects of various types and sizes.

What was staff acceptance like when Blue Ant was introduced?

If you compare the introduction of Blue Ant with other software, very positive. Basically, there is always the same problem with the introduction of new software: the staff first have to be convinced that it makes sense to introduce multi-project management software. We, as project managers, put together a core team of project leaders, who were entrusted with the full scope of the software. The team were intensively trained by proventis, and it was outlined exactly what we wanted to achieve strategically with the software. With support from proventis we decided how to proceed with the implementation and which groups should get which access rights. The core team then trained the other staff. The functions- from time recording to project billing- were then passed on bit by bit to the persons concerned.

Has Blue Ant provided a new stimulus for the management at the company?

Yes, our way of looking at forecasting in the company has changed. Blue Ant supports the managers with forecasting and thereby with the management of our projects. We now realize more quickly when a new direction needs to be taken.

Mr. Wulfes, thank you for talking to us