

Case Study

BNFL

Company Profile

BNFL is an international nuclear energy business, serving Governments and nuclear utilities worldwide. Operating in 16 countries and employing more than 23,000 people the group turnover last year was £2.22 billion.

IndigoBlue were originally contracted to provide consultancy and support within Environmental Services, who's responsibility it is for the decommissioning of nuclear power stations.

The Challenge

As a result of government legislation regarding the management of the UK's nuclear legacy, a new body, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), will be formed in 2005.

The formation of the NDA will require a substantial change in a number of the business processes within BNFL; the associated support systems and the management information produced will have to change significantly to meet the requirements stipulated in the legislation.

In order to manage the required changes a number of workstreams were created within an overall business change programme. The streams included: project control systems (tracking and time reporting); document control; supply chain management; executive reporting and infrastructure. Each of these streams had inter-dependencies and would potentially impact upon existing applications including SAP, PeopleSoft and P3E.

One key additional consideration was that until 2002, BNFL had a very small internal IT delivery capability; the majority of IT systems were commissioned within the business and implemented by third-party companies.

Our Approach

The remit of IndigoBlue was to support the programme office and to identify areas of opportunity. An initial review was performed by two IndigoBlue consultants in which the programme was audited with regard to the key agile tenets of: communication; collaboration; and quality. To achieve this the programme plans were reviewed and meetings were held with stakeholders, workstream managers and delivery managers.

A number of areas of opportunity were identified, as were the key risks. The main opportunity was in the area of cross-programme communication and collaboration and several initiatives were taken in this area. An alignment workshop was held for business stream managers which proved successful in highlighting key concerns in the team and opportunities for improvement.

The key risk identified in the report, and again in the alignment workshop, was that of the IT infrastructure. Dependencies on existing systems, physical space, network capacity and security implied that this area could jeopardise the entire programme.

Benefits Realised

The engagement of the stakeholders during the initial review, allied to the proposed introduction of Agile techniques, helped establish early buy-in to the programme. It also provided a point of reference for future user engagement.

The initiatives introduced to aid cross-stream communication, particularly the workshop, proved a great success in addressing programme issues and allowing the managers work as a team to identify solutions.

The use of regular interim deliverables, with collaborative reviews ensured that tangible progress could be tracked throughout the duration of the project and that problems could be identified (both in business process and technical areas) at an early stage. Additionally, as each workstream was working collaboratively and following a similar iterative process, opportunities for improvement could be applied in other areas, allowing any benefits to be realised programme wide.

In the key risk area of infrastructure, a strategic decision was made to implement an alternative data centre, removing the dependencies on existing systems and process. This new project presented a new set of problems, primarily due to short-timescales and fixed deadline with complex communication issues and disparate groups. The start-up of this project has recently been tasked to an IndigoBlue project manager.

“The external view of the programme allied to the Agile approach proved invaluable. We were able to focus on the highest business priorities and quickly identify and resolve areas of weakness.”

Chris Jones -
CIO BNFL