



Quality management

Necessary condition for a successful implementation of ICT applications

Why quality management?

ICT and business processes are interwoven to a large extent in the 21st century. With the appearance of real-time B2B and B2C interfaces and applications, this interconnection even extends beyond the boundaries of the business and we see an increasing complexity and dependence on ICT in the value chain.

This means that:

- Business results and continuity are directly dependent on the ICT functioning.
- Turnover growth, in combination with improvement of service provision and business results, may only be achieved in many cases by the successful introduction of new and improved ICT applications and systems.
- ICT plays a leading role in many businesses and organizations rather than just a supporting role.
- ICT is of direct influence on aspects such as customer satisfaction and supplier performance.

ICT projects have therefore become complex, extensive and far-reaching.

It happens frequently that an organization experiences great problems with the introduction of new ICT applications, or even worse, after commissioning. The result is that the advantages which were anticipated are not achieved afterwards.

Reports such as these appear in the press fairly regularly:

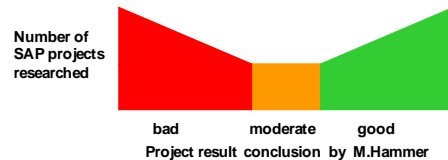
- ICT project costs higher than expected
- Production stagnates after introduction of new system
- Billing errors
- ICT handover postponed again
- Employees dissatisfied with new ICT applications

Analysis of “failed projects” teaches us that many ICT projects were doomed to failure from the outset because:

- Acceptance criteria for the product to be supplied and intermediate results were not listed explicitly (supply and demand model).
- Quality guarantees with respect to both the product to be supplied and the process to be followed were not detailed right from the very start, i.e. the project preparation.
- The quality of the project manager and crucial project employees who were assigned to the project was not sufficient.

Research into success of ERP projects

In the mid-90s, Michael Hammer – one of the American management gurus – conducted research into factors for the success or failure of ERP projects. These projects particularly are characterized by a high degree of complexity and integration of business processes and data. The market leader in the ERP field, namely SAP R/3, was chosen as an example in his research.



Michael Hammer’s conclusion? ERP projects are either very successful or they fail completely. This of course raises the question as to what distinguishes the “winners” from the “losers”.

It is apparent in practice that “winners”:

- Involve top management directly in the project;
- See an ERP project as a program of process and organizational change and not as an ICT project;
- Opt for an integral approach, in which processes and data, rather than the department or function, are central;
- Make clear to the organization what the contribution of the change program is to the (business) results and communicate continuously with employees about the results and consequences of the project;
- Pay much attention to training for the new processes, way of working and characteristics of the standard applications;
- Realize that an ERP project is not quick and simple to implement and also accept this;
- Impose demanding requirements on the quality – knowledge, experience and expertise – of all project members.

From our wide experience, **VDVL** observes that these factors of success and failure do not only apply to ERP projects.

The success factors listed above are applicable to every ICT project of some size and importance in an organization.

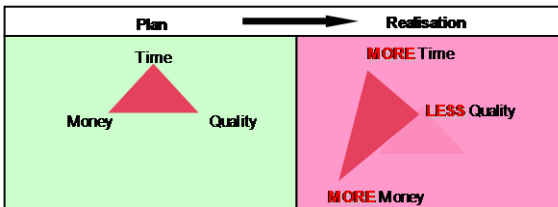


Managing the “devil’s triangle”

Every ICT project that involves new applications and interfaces affects multiple business functions directly or indirectly, and by definition influences the execution of work processes and the setup of the organization.

ICT renewal for example means:

- A new system, a different way of working and new tasks for the employees
- A different system, new knowledge and different – sometimes extra – activities for the ICT support and maintenance organization
- Setting up the organization again and a different way of managing the business process for management.



There are many factors which determine the success of a new ICT solution. For this reason, it is therefore necessary to:

- Recognize risks in good time
- Receive signals about issues and developments which directly or indirectly affect the project result, and immediately act on them.
- Work to a plan and in a way previously approved.
- Define test and acceptance criteria in advance, with which interim milestone products must comply.
- Not start a new phase or activity before the prior phase has been accepted and completed.
- Ensure that the communication line with the client is direct and short, so that deviations can be reported on quickly and measures can be taken immediately.

Prevention is better than !

Supervision and direction based on quality makes an essential contribution to the project result. **VDVL** is of the opinion that this quality assurance must be independent of the ICT project organization and the project manager.

This means that:

- An independent party must fill this role.
- This party should have an objective and relevantly expert view.
- The quality manager should have his own direct reporting line to the project principal.

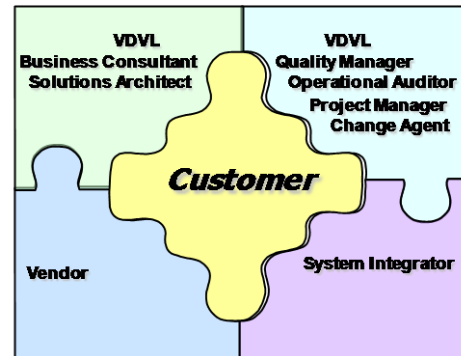
Quality management is about the quality of the process on the one hand, in other words the route via which results are achieved, and on the other hand the product, i.e. those results themselves.

Quality management is also directed towards the goal to be reached, namely:

- an operational ICT system;
- a modified organization and new way of working;
- a dependable, correct and fully-operational system;
- a properly structured management organization.

VDVL and quality management

VDVL has knowledge about and wide experience in the implementation of ICT in different organizations. This experience is based on the various roles our clients ask us to fill.



One of these roles is that of Quality manager. **VDVL's** starting point is that when we fill this role in a project, we do not ever wish to carry out the project management. For **VDVL**, that would be an undesirable double role.



Knowledge is power!

In the field of quality management, **VDVL** has knowledge of and experience with de facto standards such as Extended ISO 9126, COBIT and ITIL.

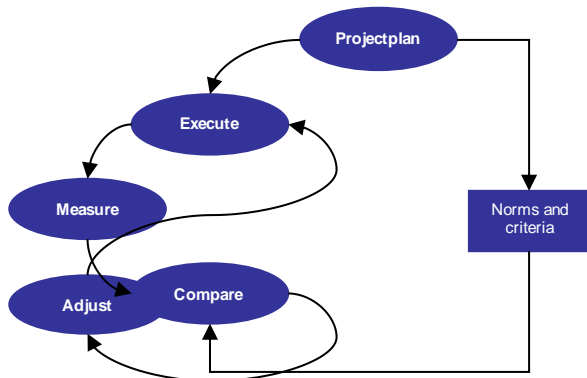
In addition to these standards, continuous sharing of experience and knowledge takes place within **VDVL**.

This means that the quality management knowledge field is continuously supplemented by the experiences of all **VDVL** employees. The final result is our own quality management methodology, based on practice.

VDVL quality management is further reinforced by:

- ☐ Its market knowledge
- ☐ Fundamental knowledge of ICT architectures, components and applications, so that ICT products too may be assessed on quality.

To supervise the quality of both the process and the products in an ICT project, **VDVL** employs checklists proved in practice to support quality assessment.



Interviews with employees in the project and organization are another way to measure the quality and progress of the process. Interim project evaluations are a third monitor.

The findings from the checklists, interviews, project reviews and evaluations are presented to the project principal in a formal report. Thereafter, the project and quality managers work out the necessary improvement actions. A formal project audit may also be conducted by **VDVL** on the request of the principal.

Call us to become better acquainted and to obtain information about our experience and references.

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