

Mjølner Informatics

Pilot project helped making a decision



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Investments in new IT-systems with far-reaching effects on daily routines and structures require thorough consideration and substantial knowledge before the final decision can be made. But what is the best way to obtain this knowledge?

It was precisely this situation the Danish company, Mjølner Informatics, found themselves in when they chose to run a one and a half month pilot project to test TimeLog Project.

A little less than one year prior to the launch of the pilot project Mjølner Informatics were using Microsoft® Project for time registration and project management. But challenges were appearing. According to Bo Frederiksen, Line Manager at Mjølner Informatics the system was too complicated and heavy.

Mjølner Informatics therefore started to look for a new system to replace the old one. Based on their previous experience with Microsoft® Project and aiming to find the perfect solution they had composed a range of criteria they wanted to fulfil. These criteria served as a checklist during the pilot project, where nearly all items were addressed.

Flexible process

Although a pilot project usually runs for just one month, it's composition varies from company to company. In the case of Mjølner Informatics approx. 6 months passed between the initial contact and the project establishment, and a further few months before the final evaluation was in place. The point of a pilot project is to give potential customers the possibility of independently testing the system – this requires that a sufficient amount of time and effort be allocated to obtain the optimal benefits from the process.

“We ran the actual pilot for about one month intensively where we used the solution as it works in reality. Subsequently we tested specific features – those that were included in our checklist as well as functions that our administration are dependent upon. In total we experienced an intense period with the creation of projects and afterwards an on-and-off period where we evaluated the various checklist criteria plus invoicing and travel expense settlement for the administration,” says Bo Frederiksen.

If one summarizes Mjølner Informatics' pilot project in efficient time, Bo Frederiksen estimates that approx. one week's worth of work has been spent on final evaluations and in total the pilot project has consumed two-three working weeks. But it is difficult to make a precise estimate.

However, according to Bo Frederiksen the internal work load in the pilot project was minimal:

“No, it has not demanded too many internal resources. It was easy to use and access. It has certainly not been an expensive project for us to try out.”

“I personally carried the heaviest work load since from the beginning I created and prepared the projects we were using, so that employees could register their time. This also meant that the daily work load during the pilot project, were time registrations were done, was minimal,” elaborated Bo Frederiksen.

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The pilot project in practice

After having had access to a pilot version of TimeLog Project two to three projects were selected to run parallel in both Microsoft® Project and TimeLog Project. The projects had different characteristics, which all characterized the work of Mjølner Informatics.

Subsequently all associated employees registered time on the project for one month, and at the end the project manager and the head of department undertook an evaluation of how the system performed compared to their regular system. Monthly recurring activities such as invoicing and approval of weekly time sheets were of special interest.

“We used the system and still use the system for time registration, project management, and as a basis for the billing potential today. A new feature is that the project manager can produce the invoice description himself – which is considered a huge benefit as the project manager holds all the needed knowledge. Thereby the project manager can finish an invoicing description directly in TimeLog Project. Moreover we also use it for vacation management – before we did it manually,” says Bo Frederiksen.

The result – insight and knowledge to make a decision

And in which way did the pilot project then help Mjølner Informatics?

“For the ordinary member of the team the pilot project has confirmed that the daily use of TimeLog Project was smooth and easy. The proper set-up of projects was possible,” explains Bo Frederiksen.

One of the concerns Mjølner Informatics had was regarding performance. The pilot project clarified this issue. The web-interface previously used with Microsoft® Project was too slow and created problems.

“Luckily the pilot project showed that TimeLog Project works without problems although it is web based. We also discovered that invoicing and generating invoicing potential is possible – this was something we had not experienced before.”

During the pilot project Bo Frederiksen contacted TimeLog several times:

“The cooperation with TimeLog during the pilot period was good and flexible. It was easy to gain access to new extensions when we wanted to test them – and replies to our questions were thorough and fast.”

Implementation with a high level of detail

After the pilot project ended Mjølner Informatics chose to implement TimeLog Project as their new time registration, project and invoicing system. The real value of the pilot project became clear during the implementation process. The results showed themselves in the form of knowledge.

“The pilot project has meant that prior to the actual implementation I had a fairly good insight into the system. This meant that the actual implementation wasn’t ‘bad’ – and that the level could be raised because we already knew the system. It also meant that we could ask more detailed questions during the implementation process – so in total we have achieved a higher level of detail.”



Mjølner Informatics is an independent, internationally oriented software house located in Denmark offering consultancy and expert system development.

Emphasis is on knowledge sharing, innovation and partnerships in counseling as well as on more than 15 years of experience with customer based system and software development.

Mjølner Informatics is a privately held company and therefore unaffiliated with external commercial interests.

Mjølner Informatics’ check-list

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|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 Web access | 8 Easy and secure back-up |
| 2 Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) | 9 Export to other formats |
| 3 Notes for time registrations | 10 Stability and performance |
| 4 Reports for sums and overview | 11 Locking of registrations |
| 5 Approval of time registration | 12 Easy allocation of employees |
| 6 User defined weekly timesheets | 13 Application for time tracking |
| 7 Open database format (API) | 14 Invoicing capabilities |

Solution

TimeLog Project
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April 2008