

REVLON

IT Department of Global Cosmetics Company Cuts Time in Meetings by up to 30 Percent

Overview

Country or Region: United States

Industry: Manufacturing—Consumer goods manufacturing

Customer Profile

Founded in 1932, Revlon is a global cosmetics, skin care, fragrance, and personal care company based in New York City. It has 4,900 employees, and its net sales in 2010 were U.S.\$1.3 billion.

Business Situation

The Revlon IT department wanted a way to reduce the number of meetings, make it easier to share project plans, and enhance collaboration between developers and project managers.

Solution

Revlon IT simplified data exchange by implementing the Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration Feature Pack.

Benefits

- Up to 30 percent less time spent in meetings
- Productivity gains of 2–5 percent
- Improved risk management
- Improved time-recording procedures
- Increased responsibility

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Piotr Prussak, Vice President of Global Applications, Revlon

Revlon, a global cosmetics and personal care company, wanted to improve the way that IT developers and project managers plan and execute work. The company deployed the Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration Feature Pack to simplify data exchange between software solutions and provide developers and project managers with the ability to share data to make project decisions. Now developers can create detailed tasks and record time against them in Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 Ultimate with MSDN. Project managers can see all of this data in Microsoft Project Server 2010. These employees have cut time spent in meetings by up to 30 percent and improved productivity by up to 5 percent. Revlon also improved risk management, expects to gain financial benefits from capitalizing project work, and can increase the responsibility of technical team leads.

Situation

Revlon is a global cosmetics, skin care, fragrance, and personal care company. Its products—with brands including Revlon, Almay, Charlie, Mitchum, and Gatineau—are sold in more than 100 countries. Headquartered in New York City, Revlon has 4,900 employees. Its net 2010 sales were U.S.\$1.3 billion.

In support of the global enterprise, the Revlon IT department runs projects including implementation and integration of enterprise resource planning software; custom application development, primarily on Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010; and development of customer-facing websites. Some projects are two weeks long and others run several years. With the big projects broken into smaller deliverables, the IT department runs 200–300 development projects per year.

Revlon IT has 22 people on its development and architecture staff. They do most of their work in the Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 Ultimate with MSDN development system. The developers are quite happy with this software and with Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010, the collaboration platform at its core.

Revlon IT has a project management office with nine full-time project managers. “Our project management staff handles different types and styles of projects, involving infrastructure team, support staff, and external vendors,” says Piotr Prussak, Vice President of Global Applications at Revlon. These staffers have long used project management software from Microsoft. Until recently, many were using Microsoft Office Project Professional 2007 with Microsoft Office Project Server 2007.

Although the Revlon IT developers and project managers were talented at their

jobs, communication between the groups often required a large number of meetings. “We had too many meetings just to coordinate detailed activities that required participation from the whole team,” says Prussak. “We would have large teams, distributed over multiple locations, all sitting down with project managers to develop detailed work plans. Effectively, a majority of the team were idle during a meeting, while only a few people were fully able to participate.”

The meetings were the best available method of communication for spelling out detailed tasks and identifying issues such as potential project risks. But they were often an ineffective way to develop and share insights. “As creative types, our technology leads often had a passive-aggressive relationship with project managers,” Prussak says. “For example, in a project meeting, they weren’t able to supply enough details for tasks in a project plan, because this wasn’t a conducive setting for them to be thinking through those issues. But then during execution they would come back to the project manager with complaints that the plan was not detailed enough.”

Part of the problem was that the two types of employees were working in different software solutions. Developers could use Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 to create and manage tasks at a detailed level, but project managers, using Office Project Server 2007, could not see those tasks to incorporate them into the larger project plan. And without that broader planning perspective, coordination was difficult. For example, it was hard to understand which tasks were dependent on other tasks. The lack of transparency could make it difficult to schedule developers’ activities, which both frustrated them and hampered their productivity.

Another frustration for developers was recording their time, which was done in Microsoft Project Web App. "Entering timesheets in Project Web App was one of developers' least-loved activities," says Prussak. Because they did all their day-to-day work in Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010, they resented having to exit that software in order to record their time.

The Revlon IT department wanted a way to optimize its project planning, reducing the number of meetings and bridging the gap between developers and project managers by improving the transparency of project data.

Solution

In October 2010, Revlon learned about a prerelease version of a new Microsoft feature pack to simplify data exchange between Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server. The Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration Feature Pack synchronizes planning and status information between the two systems, providing transparency that aids collaboration between project managers and developers.

In December, Revlon installed a test of the feature pack and provided feedback to Microsoft. At the same time, it decided to upgrade to Microsoft Project Server 2010 and Microsoft Project Professional 2010. Revlon successfully completed the upgrade in June 2011. It then installed the feature pack in its production environment.

Revlon runs all of the software on virtualized Dell PowerEdge R900 server computers with the Windows Server 2008 R2 Enterprise operating system. In addition to the two major solutions connected by the feature pack, Revlon stores data using the Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2

Enterprise data management system and analyzes that data using Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for Microsoft SharePoint and PerformancePoint Services in Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010.

In the pilot—and, in the future, on all projects—as development teams come up with detailed plans and task assignments to accomplish their goals, the team leads will enter this information in Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 (as they have always done). They will not be asked to spell it out in a meeting. With the feature pack, the details will be automatically visible to project managers in Project Server 2010. The project managers can then see dependencies, potential risks, and other issues, and modify project plans accordingly. Any such modifications will automatically display in Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010—and again information will have been conveyed without the need for large group meetings.

Developers will record their time against those detailed tasks in Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010. With the feature pack, project managers will be able to see and analyze that information using Project Server 2010. Project managers can adjust assignments or schedules in Project Server 2010, and developers will see those adjustments in Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010.

At full rollout, Revlon expects to have successfully integrated data from 15 users of Project Professional 2010 and 50 users of Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010. In the future, Revlon will further enhance its project management by adding Nintex Workflow for Project Server and by starting to use the project portfolio planning features of Project Server 2010.

“The feature pack allows people to raise flags more quickly and in a more comfortable setting—which means we make fewer mistakes.”

Piotr Prussak, Vice President of Global Applications, Revlon

Benefits

Revlon is using the Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration Feature Pack to cut down on meetings, increase productivity, aid in transparency to improve risk management, enhance time recording, and distribute responsibility.

Up to 30 Percent Less Time Spent in Meetings

With the Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration Feature Pack, developers and project managers are better able to communicate and collaborate outside of meetings.

“First and foremost, with the Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration Feature Pack we have reduced the number of project planning and status meetings,” Prussak says. He estimates that staff will reduce time spent in meetings by 10–30 percent.

Productivity Gains of 2–5 Percent

Despite spending less time in meetings, Revlon IT employees have better, quicker access to more information. This increases their efficiency. “With the feature pack we have increased productivity by probably 2–5 percent, because of the combination of spending less time in meetings and having higher quality information in the system,” Prussak says.

For example, project managers can see at a detailed level which tasks have been completed and adjust schedules and assignments accordingly. Prussak says, “Because we have more detail on these coordination activities, we can literally tell people, ‘Experiment with something new,’ or ‘Spend this weekend with your family,’ rather than ask them to wait around until some prerequisite tasks are completed.”

Improved Risk Management Through Better Data

Because the Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration Feature Pack can capture more detailed task-level data, the Revlon IT department gains more transparency, which improves risk management. “With the feature pack, everybody can look into the project and find any planning issues,” Prussak says. “We used to spend a lot of time in meetings working through potential issues and asking people to raise flags. But now the feature pack allows people to raise flags more quickly and in a more comfortable setting—which means we make fewer mistakes.”

For example, the feature pack provides project managers with data from Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 that was not previously available. “Project managers can see data such as project velocity, the number of bugs, and requirements management artifacts,” says Prussak. “So we can see when projects are going wrong and can manage the issues as needed. In fact, with the feature pack, we can pick up this information from anywhere, rather than having to always be in the office and talking to people in order to stay on top of every project.”

Improved Time-Recording Procedures

Developers can mark their hours against the detailed tasks in Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010. The feature pack automatically transfers the data to Project Server 2010. Revlon is the application to free developers from having to track day-to-day activities in the Project Web App. This improves the developers’ morale and saves time and money.

Increased Responsibility

Because the Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010 and Project Server Integration

For More Information

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For more information about Revlon products and services, call (800) 473-8566 or visit the website at:

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Feature Pack helps developers plan their projects outside of meetings, the team leads are no longer locked in their passive-aggressive relationship with project managers. Revlon IT can give the team leads more responsibility for delivery of the project. Project managers are freed to look at bigger, more forward-looking decisions.

"Team leads can no longer complain that project plans aren't detailed enough—because with the feature pack, they can control the level of detail," Prussak says. "So with the feature pack, the team leads can take more responsibility for exactly what they are doing and be more accountable to the other members of their team."

Microsoft Project Server 2010

Microsoft Project Server 2010 brings together the business collaboration platform services of Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010 with structured execution capabilities to provide flexible work management solutions. Project Server 2010 unifies project and portfolio management to help organizations align resources and investments with business priorities, gain control across all types of work, and visualize performance through powerful dashboards.

For more information about Microsoft Project Server 2010, go to:

www.microsoft.com/project/2010

Software and Services

- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Windows Server 2008 R2 Enterprise
 - Microsoft Project Server 2010
 - Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010
 - Microsoft SQL Server 2008 R2 Enterprise
- Microsoft Project Professional 2010
- Microsoft Visual Studio
 - Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 Ultimate with MSDN
 - Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2010

Technologies

- Microsoft Project Web App
- Microsoft SQL Server PowerPivot for Microsoft SharePoint
- PerformancePoint Services in Microsoft SharePoint Server 2010

Hardware

- Virtualized Dell PowerEdge R900 server computers