

PROJECT]open[

“]po[acts like a dashboard for us. Users get a consistent and comprehensive view of everything — projects, expenses, timesheets and absences.”
Laurent Gaille, Global Delivery Manager at CTP

Cambridge Technology Partners Professional Services Management

Service Management for Consulting Companies

“Our consultants really like the new project management system,” said Laurent Gaille, Global Delivery Manager at Cambridge Technology Partners (CTP). The company — headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland — installed the]project-open[project management system for 200 consultants in its offices and at multiple client sites.

The Customer

Cambridge Technology Partners is one of the largest independent consulting companies in Switzerland, with offices in Geneva and Zurich and a near-shore development center in Hungary. Thanks to a unique combination of consulting, technology and global delivery expertise, CTP provides solutions ranging from strategy through implementation and outsourcing for European Fortune 500 companies.

The Challenge

As part of the spin-off from its former parent company, Novell Inc., CTP needed to roll out its own management software, replacing the application of a first-tier ERP vendor. During the project, which lasted three months, all important operational processes had to be implemented in]po[. The main challenge was to implement these processes with as few changes as possible, while minimizing the modifications to]po[.

The Solution

The core of the CTP solution is a unified view for consultants and managers of their delivery operations and ongoing workflow approval processes. “]project-open[acts like a dashboard for us. Users get a consistent and comprehensive view of everything — projects, expenses, timesheets and absences,” says Laurent Gaille. The solution installed at CTP consists of the]project-open[standard product with the configuration template for consulting companies. In addition, CTP and the]project-open[rollout team developed a number of customized workflows in order to implement the organization-specific business rules. Finally,]po[had to be integrated with a local accounting package.

Invoicing Process

Creating customer invoices from consultants’ time is another challenge for CTP, as it is for many consulting companies. For this purpose,]po[includes an invoicing wizard that allows accountants to select a subset of timesheet hours per project and to convert the list of hours into an invoice, pricing the delivered hours according to the negotiated price list for the customers. “We are more than twice as fast at creating invoices with the new system than with the old one,” says Barry Staines, Controller of CTP.



At a glance

Customer

CTP is one of the the largest independent IT consulting companies in Switzerland and employs approximately 200 consultants.

Business Need

CTP needed to replace their existing tier-1 ERP system.

Solution

CTP added several customer-specific workflows on top of a standard]project-open[installation.

Results

The 200 consultants went on-line after only three months of implementation with customer-specific business processes.

PROJECT]open[

Open-Source vs. Closed-Source

During the intensive evaluation phase, CTP looked at a list of 12 Professional Service Management (PSA) applications with a "rational" evaluation approach. Of these 12 applications,]project-open[was the only open-source application.

As Bruno Buggiani, Delivery Head of CTP, said: "We did not have a strong preference whether an application was open-source or not, as long as it served our business needs." CTP finally selected]po[because of its higher flexibility, lower overall operating costs, and high implementation speed. "We were surprised to find a full-fledged Workflow Engine as part of an open-source application. The flexibility of this component allowed us to implement our existing processes quickly and without customizing the]po[core product."

The User Experience

Being a mix between a classical ERP system and an online community,]project-open[has been designed from scratch for an Internet/Intranet environment. For]po[, projects and customers are not just accounting objects, but collaboration spaces with Web 2.0-type collaboration features. On the financial side,]po[allows for fine-grain access control to financial and other critical information: It allows for maximum visibility to project managers and other user groups with financial permissions, while hiding sensitive information from less senior users.

Consultants, in turn, have access to all the information relevant to their activities in a single place, with an integrated workflow inbox that allows them to initiate and track their timesheet, vacation and travel expense claims.

The Implementation Project

The implementation project started with a customization phase to implement CTP's core admin processes, such as vacation planning and travel cost management. "This workflow has allowed us to adapt the system to our processes without customization. So we can upgrade to the next version of]po[when business needs require," says Laurent Gaille. "The transition from our previous system was relatively smooth thanks to]po['s easy customization of labels, lists and plug-in components."

Implementation Highlight

Replacement of an existing tier-1 ERP application three months after the kickoff. Users report a significant increase in usability after the upgrade to]po[.

Key Modules Used

- ▶]po[Project Management
- ▶]po[Portfolio Management
- ▶]po[Timesheet Management
- ▶]po[Timesheet Invoicing
- ▶]po[Project Controlling
- ▶]po[Travel Cost Management
- ▶]po[Full-Text Search
- ▶]po[Absences Management

Business Results

Apart from replacing an existing ERP system,]project-open[achieved several improvements in terms of visibility, accessibility, and time savings.

"We had very few complaints despite the rush of the project," says Laurent Gaille. The ease of use, together with the full-text search engine, saves consultants valuable time. In addition, middle management now has an improved visibility of project progress, as]po[real-time entries allows them to compare ongoing project progress with consumed resources. Accounting claims that invoicing now works more than twice as fast as with the old system.

Other results include:

- ▶ The implementation was on time and within budget
- ▶ Smooth transition from the old ERP system to]po[
- ▶ The entire system for 200 consultants runs on a standard Intel single-processor server
- ▶ CTP staff ranks]po[higher in usability than the old solution
- ▶ A third phase is scheduled to begin soon:]po[will be expanded to manage resource skills, improving the assignment of resources to engagements