

Raising the Bar with Agresso

Project Chrysalis - Transforming Services





Project Chrysalis was the University of Northampton's project to transform services and improve operational efficiency.

It provided users with a much improved integrated business support and management information service for Finance, HR and Payroll, and Customer Relationship Management (CRM).

The project was strategically important to the University as it underpinned many of the goals of their "Raising" the Bar strategy.

The project ensured practices and procedures became more efficient, whilst retaining previous best practice.



Raising the Bar with Agresso

Project Chrysalis, transforming services

Project Chrysalis was the University of Northampton's hugely successful project for implementing their new HR/Payroll and Finance system using Agresso Business World (ABW) from Unit4, to replace the legacy QLP and QLF applications previously in use at the University.

In April 2014, the University successfully rolled-out the HR and Payroll system for the start of the Tax Year and 3 months later the Financial system for the start of the Academic Year.

The success of the project though was even more remarkable given the state of the project in October 2013, when Andrew Smith-West was brought in as the new project manager

Prior to appointing Andrew Smith-West, the University had seemingly done everything right at the start of the project by hiring a senior project manager with experienced of Agresso and securing sufficient consultancy support from the vendor Unit4, but by August there was conflict with Unit4, the project manager was asked to leave and KMPG were asked to report on the failing project.

The Project was marked at RED status in the KPMG report, due to the lack of overall Project Plan, the late forecasts for Go-Lives and problems with Unit4 consultancy availability

KPMG report defined a number of significant risks to the project concerning Project Governance, and lack of attention to the business transformation aspects of the project.

Doing the right things in the right way

At the re-start of the project Andrew focused on: re-defining the vision; re-captivating the key drivers; and confirming the project's objectives. He reviewed the state of progress and determined why the project had gone off track; looked at what had worked well; and re-evaluated the remaining activities to be done. He then reaffirmed and defined new roles and responsibilities, and developed a viable schedule and new management plan.

He then delivered the newly re-branded Project Chrysalis.

When reporting in January, KPMG stated: "Following the appointment of the replacement Project Manager, Andrew Smith-West, the project has undergone key changes including the unification of the various project work streams, revising the Project Initiation Document into a single document and changing the project governance groups.

- ◆ Project plans are updated regularly and contained sufficient detail, with resource constraints and dependencies tracked by the project manager.
- ◆ Project governance was re-launched in October 2013. A revised PID was issued, with a Management Board meeting on a monthly basis. This was supported by a fortnightly project update report and Operational project meetings."

"Andrew Smith-West joined our systems implementation project when it was in crisis, and using his considerable management, project and interpersonal skills stabilised it and ensured it was delivered on time to the revised timetable. He has a wealth of experience and an ability to use this in an effective manner ."

◆ *Damian Pickard*
Deputy Finance Director

Under Andrew's guidance, the University successfully negotiated a resolution with Unit4 regarding resourcing and secured confirmed bookings for an improved level of consultancy from Unit4 through to the project completion.

Additional consultancy support from a Unit4 partner was also procured, and included within the revised project budget, to support completion and successful testing of the HR and Payroll modules..

Whilst individual workstreams continued to maintain their own day-to-day activities, the Project Manager maintained a central plan with sufficient detail to ensure coherence of the project and to permit monitoring of resource availability.

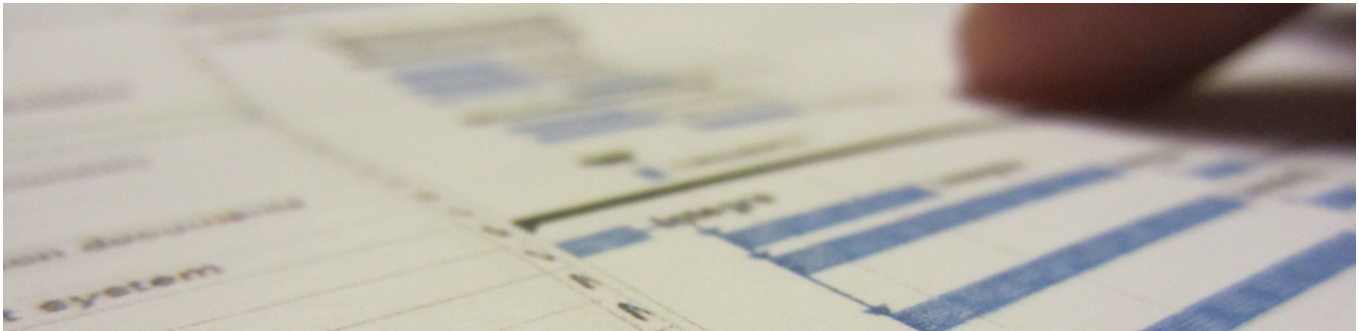
The project plan was updated following the fortnightly operations board meeting and one-to-one sessions with Workstream Leads. The Project Manager also co-ordinated a regular review of inter-dependencies between project work streams, which were updated during the fortnightly operations board meetings.

Upon completion of key milestones, stage gate reviews were undertaken by the Project Board as a pre-requisite to commencing the next stage of the project.

KPMG also identified many significant improvements made to the project since their original review, that had been introduced by the Project Manager.

- ◆ An independent representative, the Deputy Dean of the School of Science had been invited to join the Management Board and attended all meetings to date.
- ◆ A revised budget was agreed by the Senior Management Team and was monitored by the project's Management Board.
- ◆ Risks and issues were actively discussed at operational level and tracked to completion. Key risks were highlighted within the project update report and discussed at Management Board.
- ◆ A communications plan was developed, with active communication to University staff taking place in the form of roadshows.
- ◆ The cutover to the live systems was meticulously planned with a detailed cutover plan produced.
- ◆ Daily stand up meetings were held prior to go-live focused on meeting the cutover plan and individual responsibilities.
- ◆ There was a clear go-live criteria agreed with the Project Board.
- ◆ Benefits were identified and actively tracked.

These were all, undoubtedly, significant factors in the subsequent success of the project.



Effective Project Management

With nearly 20 years' experience of delivering Unit4 Business World (Agresso) upgrades and implementations, with associated business change, Andrew Smith-West has an exemplary track record of successfully delivering projects on time and to budget

Repeatable Success

Andrew's clients have included: Integra Associates, easyJet, University of Northampton, Leicestershire Police Force, Lincoln City Council and the House of Lords.

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