



LINFOX BOOSTS PMO CAPABILITY WITH SENSEI'S PROJECT, PORTFOLIO AND WORK MANAGEMENT SOLUTION

As a large organisation with multiple projects and millions of dollars of capital at work at any given time, Linfox sought automation, efficiency and improved reporting from its project management office. The logistics leader brought Sensei Project Solutions on board for the delivery of its pre-configured Microsoft Project Portfolio and Work Management environment.

As a result, Linfox today enjoys unprecedented transparency, standardised approaches to project management and the ability to anticipate and solve problems before they adversely impact delivery.

In 1956, founder Lindsay Fox started Linfox with one truck in Melbourne, Australia. More than 60 years later, the company has grown to become Asia Pacific's largest privately-owned logistics company, employing more than 24,000 people across 12 countries. Linfox's distinctive red and yellow vehicles are widely recognised in these countries, along with the slogan each carries: 'You are passing another FOX'.

SITUATION

Linfox's Head of Project Management Office Fiona Porter says that as more projects than ever were being handled through the PMO, the limitations of manual processes became obvious. "The biggest issues were the lack of transparency and the limited information we had on which to make decisions. When everything is manual you are reliant upon lag not lead indicators.

COMPANY NAME
Linfox

INDUSTRY
Logistics

LOCATION(S)
Global Organisation

HEADQUARTER
Melbourne, Australia
Offices in 12 countries

SIZE
24,000+

What this meant in practice is that if any project ran into challenges, taking action wasn't possible until it was too late. "We didn't have the information needed to take proactive measures." Porter adds.

Providing insight, Ms Porter explains that with a team of five, the Linfox PMO generally has up to 50 projects under its remit in any given month, which may be located in or across several countries in which it is operational. These projects span warehouse, transport and corporate solutions across the Linfox Group. These projects span warehousing, transport, logistics and IT solutions across the broader Linfox Group. In terms of personnel, the PMO interfaces with multiple project managers, some of whom are contractors and others who are Linfox employees.



Without a standardised tool in the PMO, project managers were using their own methods and project management principles, rather than a standardised one. This complicated portfolio-level reporting, placing a burden on the PMO while limiting the quality of information available to company executives.

SOLUTION

While appreciating the necessity for a tool which would support the maturity sought by the PMO, Ms Porter says there was a slight hurdle. "In the absence of such a tool, making the necessary investment was a challenge."

Overcoming the obstacle, she explains, involved painstakingly doing all the tasks required of the eventual solution over the course of a year, documenting the effort required and demonstrating the benefits. "In effect, this was building the business case for a suitable Project and Portfolio Management software."

At the same time, Ms Porter set about identifying potential solutions available on the market. Research led her to Sensei Project Solutions and Microsoft Project Online. After attending one of Sensei's quarterly user groups, reviewing reference sites and a demonstration, Sensei's Project, Portfolio and Work Management toolset was selected as the ideal solution. As a pre-configured Microsoft Project, Portfolio and Work Management (PPM) environment, the Sensei solution is aligned with industry standards from Gartner and the Project Management Institute (PMI®). The solution is designed for three user types: individuals working within projects, their project managers, and portfolio managers within the PMO. It is also

designed for rapid deployment, delivering a functioning PPM environment with projects and resources loaded within a matter of weeks rather than months.

Ms Porter describes the software implementation as a success, despite the considerable scale of Linfox's operations and project portfolio. "It took less than three months, with most of the time and effort focused on the change component and training our people. That's because with the introduction of a standardised way of doing projects, we had to get all our project managers on the same page."

While the solution includes Sensei's Report Packs, a set of standardised reports which allow the rapid production of insights for executives, Ms Porter has gone further, integrating Linfox's financial system and time sheeting into Project Online.

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"We've put in more functionality, probably, than most businesses do and there are challenges with that. However, in terms of loading resources and projects so we can set a baseline, it's nothing short of amazing".

Fiona Porter, Head of Project Management Office, Linfox

BENEFITS REALISED



By using Sensei's Project, Portfolio and Work Management solution Linfox can today enjoy substantially improved visibility and project team collaboration across the organisation.



PROGRESS TRACKING
The Project Management Office can accurately track progress of all projects.



RESOURCE NEEDS
Project Managers can assess resource needs and utilisation.



IMPROVED SCHEDULING
The Project Management Office can plan their schedules in advance and allocate personnel accordingly.



FORECASTING & ROI
The Project Management Office can forecast all project costs & information which is crucial in understanding project performance & ROI.

RESULTS

The headline benefit of Linfox's Sensei implementation is, quite simply, a matured Project Management Office. "We've evolved tremendously over the past two years and that's enabled by this system," says Ms Porter.

Standard tools mean all project managers and all projects are conducted within the same framework. This translates to information congruency and improved transparency, with project managers generally pleased with a prescribed method for running their initiatives.

As a result, it also means the PMO knows what is happening in every project – visibility which provides crucial insights for business and finance executives from a portfolio level, right down to individual projects. "At any point in time, we can access any project dimensions we might want to see – progress, return on investment, costs, resources committed," Ms Porter confirms.

"We have a strong scheduling capability, which just wasn't there previously. Now, we know what's going to be happening in advance and can allocate personnel accordingly."

The capability has proven particularly relevant with the rapid changes in the business landscape driven by global COVID-19 response, as has the availability of a service accessible from anywhere. Not only can the PMO function effectively in a 'work from home' basis, but where necessary and possible, resources can be pivoted and reallocated to meet changed priorities.

Through the integration of time sheeting with Project Online, Linfox is well positioned to analyse and understand all project costs including personnel – information crucial in understanding project performance and ROI. This function also provides for transparent charge-out and charge-back.

By combining the Sensei Project, Portfolio and Work Management solution including Sensei Report Packs (and customising the Report Packs to its specific requirements) and introducing a reporting layer with Microsoft Power BI, Linfox

has gone even further, delivering reports for its executives 'on demand'. "This contributes to better risk management. Reporting is consistent and frequent: reports are issued weekly as standard, rather than monthly, and they take 5 minutes to produce. And with Power BI sitting on top of it, our executives can actually pull a report themselves any time they'd like to see what's happening," Ms Porter explains.

She says the extent of the capabilities of Project Online and the Sensei solution can be overwhelming for project managers and executives alike. "There's a lot there, so we started with simplified data sets with the most 'in demand' information that executives need to know. Over the course of a year, we've continually improved and enhanced the solution so that today, it's an enabler for project managers, with dashboards keeping everyone on the same page."

Moreover, she says executives appreciate reports which tell them what they need to know rather than what they want to hear. "The true value of information is knowing not only what's going well, but also knowing what needs attention. With Sensei's expertise the bottom line is we've substantially uplifted the capability of the PMO, because we're able to keep track of all our projects -and at the end of the day, that means better delivery for Linfox as a business."

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