

# ESSENTRA CONTROLS ITS PROJECTS AND MINIMISES RISK WITH A CENTRAL PLATFORM AND STANDARDISED PROCESSES

*Essentra is a leading global provider of essential components and solutions for industries such as equipment manufacturing, automotive, fabrication, electronics and construction. Its Components, Packaging and Filters divisions operate across an international network of 33 countries, with some 50 principal manufacturing facilities, 30 sales and distribution operations and 4 research and development centres.*



**INDUSTRY**  
Manufacturing

**LOCATION**  
Milton Keynes,  
United Kingdom

**CHALLENGE**  
Deliver a single project management platform to standardise processes and minimise business risk

**PRODUCTS & SERVICES**  
Microsoft Project Online,  
Microsoft Power BI,  
edison365projects

**RESULTS**  
Consistent project management.  
Improved project outcomes.  
Better informed and faster business decisions.  
Improved productivity.

## Critical to success

Essentra is a complex international business supported by a wide range of projects. Many are small in scale, but some involve multi-million pound investment, tie up a lot of staff time, and take years to deliver. Convinced that effective project management is critical to its profitability and business success, Essentra set up a Group PMO to transform its project management procedures.

*“We need one way of working across the world,” says Global Project Director Stephen Williamson. “That requires a central platform where every project can be logged using common processes. Standardisation is the only way to get visibility and make sure all projects are aligned to group strategy. We can then see who is working on what project, whether they are on track and on budget, and measure results against objectives.”*

Stephen Williamson - Global Project Director  
Essentra

The Components, Packaging and Filters divisions are responsible for around 70% of business projects at Essentra, with IT delivering the other 30%. IT had a PMO to coordinate its projects on a common platform, but the three divisions used different toolsets across departments and had no common way to report or share project status and resource demands. Essentra needed a central project management system to support all three business divisions initially, and eventually the IT department to ensure group wide consistency. Stephen Williamson embarked on the journey to identify and implement such a solution.

## Assessing the market

*“Some of the platforms we looked at were a bit basic for our more complex projects,” says Stephen Williamson. “Others were good for resourcing and managing ongoing projects – time sheeting for example – but weren’t so strong on delivery processes.”*

Microsoft Project was always a contender, and as the review progressed, Microsoft Project Online looked like the best fit with Essentra's requirements. Microsoft introduced Stephen Williamson to CPS, the leading implementation specialist for Microsoft Project Portfolio Management (PPM) technologies in the UK, and a Global PPM Microsoft partner of the year.

*“From my first conversation with CPS, it was clear they had good credibility for their services. CPS had successfully implemented Project Online with many customers and having Microsoft Gold partner status was a big tick. CPS seemed to ‘get’ what I needed, and their business experience above and beyond project management was a real plus.”*

As Essentra uses Office 365 as a core Platform, Project Online could be easily integrated with other Microsoft services within the company and finding IT support would not be a problem. Another factor was that most of Essentra's staff involved in projects had some familiarity with Microsoft, so learning to use Project Online would be easier.

Essentra appointed CPS to help implement the Microsoft PPM toolset, based on Microsoft Project Online and Microsoft BI, with added functionality from edison365 projects. The solution would be delivered in two phases: the three divisions would be first, and the IT department would come on board in phase two.

## Understanding the business

CPS set up a series of Discovery Workshops to understand Essentra's business requirements and priorities. They then ran a one-day Change Management assessment of the current systems landscape, to understand the impact and the depth of training needed for the new solution.

A prototype solution was provided to familiarise Essentra stakeholders and provide valuable feedback before CPS consultants built the Production solution. User Acceptance Testing ironed out any issues, while training material and adoption plans were developed.

The solution was initially launched to a pilot group before being rolled out gradually across the three divisions in 2020. CPS continues to support the Essentra team during this launch period to ensure user adoption and provide valuable knowledge transfer to the internal team.

Administration courses are being run for PMO leads, and training for project managers and project team members through to midyear. Both courses are designed so that Essentra can run them internally.

Stephen Williamson says that even at this early stage a number of Essentra projects are using the platform. Reports suggest that staff like using the new standard processes and there have been a number of improvements in project delivery.

*“Because the platform guides project managers through the main steps, it enforces the process and takes some of the burden away which helps productivity and efficiency.”*

The solution is also creating greater project visibility.

*“I’ve had good feedback from the management committee that reviews our projects. I’m now able to say with supporting evidence: ‘these projects are working well, and these aren’t. We’ve already identified a couple of projects where red flags have gone up and I’m able to explain why and offer my recommendation. We can agree quickly the corrective actions, so it is helping us make better and faster business decisions.’”*



CPS is now supporting Essentra with Phase 2, enabling the IT PMO to leverage the new platform. Stephen Williamson believes that will be implemented with even better results, because of what has been learned from phase 1.

*“CPS have shown us how to make the changes we need to be semi-autonomous and we intend to continually improve our project management performance. Projects are crucial to our business and now we have a standardised central platform, we need to be vigilant in how we keep control and offer our Project Managers the level of support they need to deliver projects successfully.”*

#### **Business benefits**

- Business projects can now be logged and reviewed on a single platform
- Standardisation delivers improved project delivery and more productive teams
- Decision making is better informed and faster because of better visibility
- Effective project management is imbedded in the corporate ethos.



#### **A word from the team...**

*“We worked closely with CPS to address challenges along the way, and CPS senior management were very supportive with extra resource when we needed it. CPS’ breadth of experience was invaluable. Their work implementing similar solutions helped us achieve good adoption methods and imbed new ways of working to maximise the solution’s success.”*

*Stephen Williamson, Global Project Director  
Essentra*

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