

Evangel University Builds Project Management Capability

Gary Blackard, CIO of Evangel University, was worried. He was transitioning Evangel to a new ERP system, a suite of integrated applications that the university would use to collect, store, manage and interpret data. He felt confident in his selection of the system, but he also knew that implementation would be long and complicated. "My stress level was high," said Blackard. "I knew we didn't have the project management skill necessary to manage that complex of a project, and I also knew that I didn't have the time, or that it was appropriate for my role as CIO, to fill the gap."

NK Shrivastava, RefineM's CEO, offered Blackard two possible solutions. First option: Shrivastava would serve as project manager, and he and his RefineM team would see the project through to completion. Second option: he would initiate the project management, put a plan and processes into place, and train someone internally to transition into the role of project manager to see the project through.

Blackard chose the second option. He quickly realized he had made the right choice. "Several weeks in, I experienced a sense of relief that the project was now well in control. It was also gratifying to see my team gaining a new sense of purpose. Before, they didn't know what they didn't know. But after seeing what a project manager brought to the table, the value of that role, and the value of a project manager's toolkit, they had a new level of interest in project management."

Keith Jones was one of the two new project managers mentored by Shrivastava. "I didn't have a lot of background in project management," said Jones. "There was a learning curve. For example, initially I struggled with what project management tools to use when. NK narrowed the field to something that became very manageable."

The suite of project management tools that Shrivastava brought to Evangel, RefineM's Essential Gear for Project Managers, continues to be used by Evangel to maintain a set of consistent project management processes. "The tool kit has proved its worth," said Blackard. "For example, we had a challenge early on engaging some of our stakeholders on the ERP project. The stakeholder analysis tool helped us develop a strategy that allowed us to focus on each stakeholder individually to bring them into alignment."

The tools also came into good use when the project hit "a massive mid-way switch in direction," according to Jones. "It was a surprise, and no one knew what to do next. In retrospect, it was a great opportunity to see NK manage the revamping of a project. He started by working with our team to re-write the project charter. This gave us a foundation to move forward, to clarify what we needed to do next."

The ERP project may have been successfully completed, but for Jones, the journey has just begun. He is now preparing to take the exam for PMP certification. "I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to be mentored by NK. He has a teacher's heart. He was always available to me, and he was always able to explain things in a way that made sense. His mentoring put me on a path to prepare for my new career as a project manager."

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Client Results Summary

Evangel University, poised to implement a complex ERP transition, lacked the necessary project management resources to see the project through. RefineM took over the reins of the project, not only delivering the project, but developing people and project management processes along the way that the university could continue to leverage for years to come.

About RefineM LLC

RefineM helps organizations turn their project management capability into a competitive advantage by carefully listening to needs, helping to implement highly optimized project plans, deploying simple but effective tools and techniques, and training and mentoring project managers and teams.

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