

IN TIME

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THERE IS NO PLAN THAT CAN SURVIVE CONTACT WITH REALITY

Product development planning is based on a “zero errors” approach. At the same time, increasingly digital team communication and rapid technological changes in the production environment are placing growing demands on all of the parties involved. These factors can quickly turn projects into complex undertakings and augment the risk of failure in the process. So how can projects be turned into success stories nonetheless?

Complexity is the perfect challenge for Schnitzer Group employees! They are using “Systemic Project Management” to adapt conventional project structures so that they can handle increasing complexity, and to identify potential risks and then resolve them together with the customer’s

project team. “We pursue an agile approach, using creative ideas and unconventional suggestions in our work with the project teams”, explains managing director Peter Schnitzer. “The suggestions that will allow a project objective to be achieved in an efficient manner can come

from our employees on location, but we usually develop them within the team.” This enables other colleagues to contribute their knowledge and experience. Collective intelligence is used to master complex challenges.

The success of a project relies on communication, combined with technical expertise, among all team members from all of the partners involved. As external experts, Schnitzer Group employees have the special task of getting the project partners together and discussing objectives, processes and restrictions. Interaction boosts transparency and provides guidance to all of the parties involved. They join forces to identify balanced measures which are then implemented in a team-oriented manner later on.

Thomas Schuol, Wangen site manager, says: “For us in the project business, technical expertise and social skills are equally important. The more we communicate with each other, the more transparent a project becomes and the faster and more efficient we can be in achieving the project objective together. A project is always a team achievement. Our project employees promote the culture of trust that has to be created for a project to work, and indeed establish this sort of culture as a prerequisite. 





Dear readers,

How do we work here at the Schnitzer Group and, most importantly: How do we collaborate with our customers? The answer is simple: "As a team". Each and every employee has extensive specialist knowledge and experience gleaned from a whole number of different projects, making him or her a sought-after point of contact for our customers. But we can only take full advantage of our strength if we call upon the collective expertise of all employees. We discuss the best strategy for a particular project internally in small or large groups, allowing us to come up with the best solution. The solution is implemented using a teamwork approach, too, namely hand-in-hand with the customer. We accompany this process as fully integrated members of project teams, offering our perspective as externals who are independent of established structures. This sort of collaboration works because we are open to our colleagues as people, talk to them and discuss the challenges facing us together. Our idea of what makes a "team" has been the key to our success for 25 years now.

Yours


Peter Schnitzer



MULTIDIMENSIONAL COMPONENT FEASIBILITY TESTING USING AUTOFORM R7

Feasibility testing is about being familiar with as many parameters and process steps as possible before evaluating them and assigning weightings to them based on component-specific features. In order to provide our customers with an independent basis on which to make decisions on contract awards and the commissioning of suppliers, the Schnitzer Group recently introduced the newly developed

AutoForm R7 Planning & Bidding software to enable an additional internal calculation database check to be performed. The program analyzes the CAD data for the actual component and uses this as a basis for the cost calculation, provides guidance for feasibility testing and highlights any potential for cost savings relating to the component and the tools involved early on. "For our customers, the software unfolds its full potential particularly when it is used in combination with our global tool databases", says Stefan Mangold, project manager at the Schnitzer Group. "Especially for high-strength materials and in lightweight aluminum construction, this allows much more accurate statements to be made on feasibility at a very early stage in the component development project phase." 



AGILE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER WITH THE FUN FACTOR



What does agility have to do with Scrum or Kanban? What role does agility play in industry? What forms the basis for an agile corporate culture? To find a response to these questions, Christian Meier, project manager at the Schnitzer Group, developed the CREATOR simulation game to allow participants to get to grips with the basics of agile models. The combination of lectures and the practical application of the content facilitates the knowledge transfer process. The simulation of a real customer-supplier relationship provides an insight into the product development process and is a fun way of highlighting the need for transparency, information flow and networking. The Schnitzer Group is also offering and using the simulation game for customer projects. 

3:0 FOR TEAMWORK

One of the Schnitzer Group's top priorities is efficient teamwork, allowing highly complex projects to be tackled and implemented successfully.



1. Working in parallel

In multi-project environments, the Schnitzer Group employees are allocated to the individual work packages using a matrix developed by the company itself. A conscious decision is made not to involve each team member in all of the projects. Cross-project meetings are held with the customer at regular intervals to ensure flawless coordination. The Schnitzer Group project managers keep their customer colleagues from project management, procurement, quality and the management team up to date, identify the measures that need to be taken from a technical perspective and pass this information on to the team. The Schnitzer Group employees then get to work based on the information they have been given, or get in touch with the project-specific contacts themselves directly, depending on the situation. There are four key questions that are raised at the weekly "jour fixe" meetings: Has the schedule been finalized? Will the deadlines be met? Is there a need for escalation? How is the project collaboration going? This allows the Schnitzer Group teams to ensure productive consultation sessions with their customers at all times.

2. Knowledge transfer

A common knowledge base plays a key role in a project's success. This is why knowledge transfer and collective intelligence is a top priority at the Schnitzer Group – even beyond national borders. A five-strong Schnitzer Group team worked for a TIER1 automotive manufacturer in Germany, the Czech Republic, Portugal and Poland to act as a neutral partner of the OEM. The team focused on monitoring the factories and providing support in establishing optimized processes for three new

vehicle model lines. Sharepoint, internal team conference calls and Teamshare groups were established as tools in advance in order to ensure smooth communications. This closely networked way of working allowed the customer to achieve efficiency gains more quickly than usual in the industry. This working style offers several advantages: no tying up of resources unnecessarily, productive knowledge sharing between the project managers and ongoing access to the extensive competence pool of the Schnitzer Group.

3. Effective ticket system

As little as necessary and as much as possible: in order to achieve this, the Schnitzer Group also uses a ticket system that allows orders placed at short notice to be realized within a pre-defined framework – either as regional tickets comprising similar duties at a fixed price, or as task-specific tickets. Customers benefit from the system's simplicity and transparency,

but above all from its flexibility. This is because the ticket system ensures that it is always the right employee for the task in hand who is sent out. Even a combination of the two models can be achieved at any time. The decision on which assignments and which employees are the most suitable is made jointly by key account managers within the Schnitzer Group, selected project managers and the customer. ☺



PASSED!

Collaboration between external service providers and industrial companies is often a juggling act that has to pay attention to aspects associated with legal principles, service performance and billing at the same time. The Schnitzer Group offers its customers customized cooperation models that are geared towards achieving the project objectives and the greatest possible degree of transparency. Within this context, companies regularly review compliance with the legal and content-related requirements of service contracts in which a specific result is agreed upon (Werkverträge). An internal audit recently conducted by a customer once again confirmed that the Schnitzer Group meets all of the applicable requirements and commissioning formalities – with not a single objection being raised. "We are the absolute benchmark, even as far as our contracts are concerned," said a delighted Marius Schindler, project manager at the Schnitzer Group. "This means that our customers can be confident that we are a reliable partner in this respect, too." ☺

3 EMPLOYEES, 3 QUESTIONS

Hubert Sinz is a project manager who has been with the Schnitzer Group since 2010, his colleague Andreas Helfenberger joined the company three years later and Luis Gapp is currently in the process of writing his bachelor's dissertation. We ask the three of them what they think the special thing is about working for the Schnitzer Group.

Why did you choose the Schnitzer Group?

Helfenberger: The areas of activity are very varied and constantly give me new challenges to work on – so it never gets boring! I value the sense of team spirit and the direct communication within the entire Schnitzer Group.

Sinz: The very interesting areas of activity also won me over, as did the management's desire to innovate and the considerable degree of personal responsibility that everyone has here.

Gapp: There is virtually no other company in which you have as many opportunities for further personal and professional development. I liked the campus mentoring concept, in particular.

What advantages does the Schnitzer Group offer you compared with other, bigger companies?

Sinz: There are very few companies in which you can gain the same sort of experience

as you can within the Schnitzer Group. We are constantly communicating with each other, either on a one-to-one basis or in a group. The atmosphere within the company is unique and the general sentiment is very positive.

Helfenberger: I also think it's great that we can always sit down with the management members themselves, which allows us to make decisions very quickly and pragmatically.

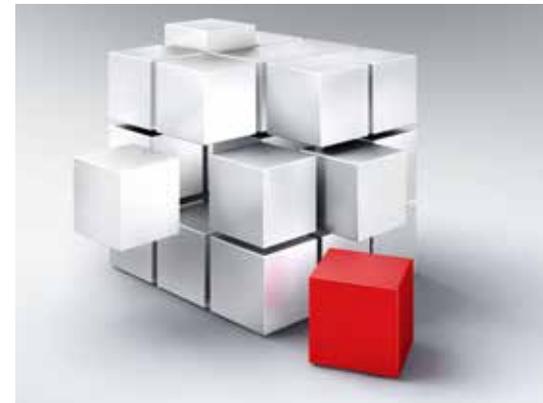
Gapp: The flat hierarchies enable a direct and effective flow of information among all employees. There is a real culture of helping each other, achieving common goals. Our colleagues aren't interested in indulging in departmental egoism or efforts to outshine others.

The Schnitzer Group's projects often involve a lot of travel and, as a result, time. Can you still achieve a work-life balance in this sort of environment?

Sinz: It is possible, thanks to flexible working conditions that you can usually set, or

at least influence, yourself. The same applies the other way around, as I recently learned: the company is flexible with its employees in exceptional personal circumstances.

Helfenberger: There is no one set solution for achieving a work-life balance; we work together within a team to develop ideas that suit the individual. After all, if you're single, then your idea of "work-life balance" is completely different to that of a father. ☺



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IT'S ALL THANKS TO MECHANICS



Runs like Swiss clockwork – this phrase has a deeper meaning for Andreas Pilz, who has been working for the Schnitzer Group in Kornwestheim since 2011. This is because the graduate and technology manager has a passion for mechanical watches and is the proud owner of various models from Germany, Switzerland and even Japan. Andreas Pilz came to the Schnitzer Group back during his studies at the Ravensburg-Weingarten University of Applied Sciences, and also wrote his final dissertation for his Bachelor of Engineering degree at the company. With his expertise on "Systemic Project Management", the 29 year-old is currently working primarily on automotive projects at renowned manufacturers. Andreas Pilz, who is originally from Lindenberg in the Allgäu region, likes to swim or jog in and around Stuttgart in his spare time. ☺