



Digital transformation of energy companies: More efficient internal processes

+ Two case studies

WHITE PAPER



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Introduction

The exit from fossil fuel and nuclear energy, regulations, competition, emancipated consumers: Few companies face as many different challenges as the energy sector. Why? Because the energy market has changed radically in only a few years.

On their way to digital transformation, traditional energy companies encounter many roadblocks, but just as many opportunities. Digital transformation is a chance for them to actively rebuild their future. On one condition, however: They act efficiently and productively in order to increase customer satisfaction and retention, to stay competitive and to increase their sales in the long run.



In this white paper you will learn how energy companies can optimize their internal processes, and about the advantages they will result in.

We collected two case studies of proMX customers from the energy sector whom we helped with their digital transformation by transforming a crucial part of their business: their project management.

Digital transformation: dimensions and advantages

Digital transformation starts where the most pain points of energy companies lie: at inefficient processes, makeshift software solutions and heterogeneous IT landscapes. The goal is to transform organizations with digital means that will make them more flexible and more capable of adapting to changing customer expectations.

How does digital transformation affect a company?

Microsoft worked out four interlinked dimensions of digital transformation:



The larger an energy company, the more complex its challenges are. For small companies as well as large enterprises, one of the most pressing issues is optimizing their internal processes: more efficiency, more seamless processes, better project management. Digital technologies empower companies to tackle these and other dimensions of digital transformation.

In order to fulfill customer needs, companies need to optimize their internal processes. Company culture is crucial, but so are the selected tools. Important aspects include, but are not limited to a (hybrid) cloud environment, modern infrastructure, and mobile apps. They make sales, project management and customer service processes more efficient and productive.



What are the advantages of digital transformation?

Many companies have no choice but to embrace digital transformation in order to remain competitive in the future. They will only be able to adapt to market changes and changing customer requirements quickly if they become agile and flexible. Optimized processes lead to better customer service and more attractive products and services.

The advantages of digital transformation include:

- **Cost savings:** With automation and an increase in efficiency, process costs of around 20 per cent can be saved.
- **Sales increase:** Digital products or even a digital business model will help you increase your sales.
- **Data insights:** In areas where costs don't go down automatically, a closer look at your data can help you identify opportunities for optimization.
- **Customer satisfaction:** The more seamless your processes, the more satisfied your customers. Digital transformation helps you act customer-centric and thus meet expectations better.
- **Attractive employer:** Modern and innovative companies attract more and better-qualified employees. Improved and less complicated processes will leave them much more satisfied with their employer.
- **Innovative power:** Digital technology does not only improve what you already have, but creates new opportunities, too – for your Sales, Marketing or Service department. With the cloud, new ideas cost less. Prototypes for example can be developed much faster.

Case studies

proMX has experience with working with different companies from the energy sector and offering them a helping hand with their digital transformation. In the two case studies we collected for you, you will learn how these companies were able to optimize their project management by implementing and adapting modern and customizable tools.



Example I: A surge of energy

The project

Size: Large (10,000+ employees)

Products:  Dynamics 365 Sales
 Dynamics 365 Project Service Automation
 SharePoint

Summary:  Successfully transformed project business by replacing makeshift solution with a professional and fully customizable software for project and resource management

 Project cycle complemented by Dynamics 365 Sales

 SharePoint integration for Dynamics 365 to improve document management

About the company

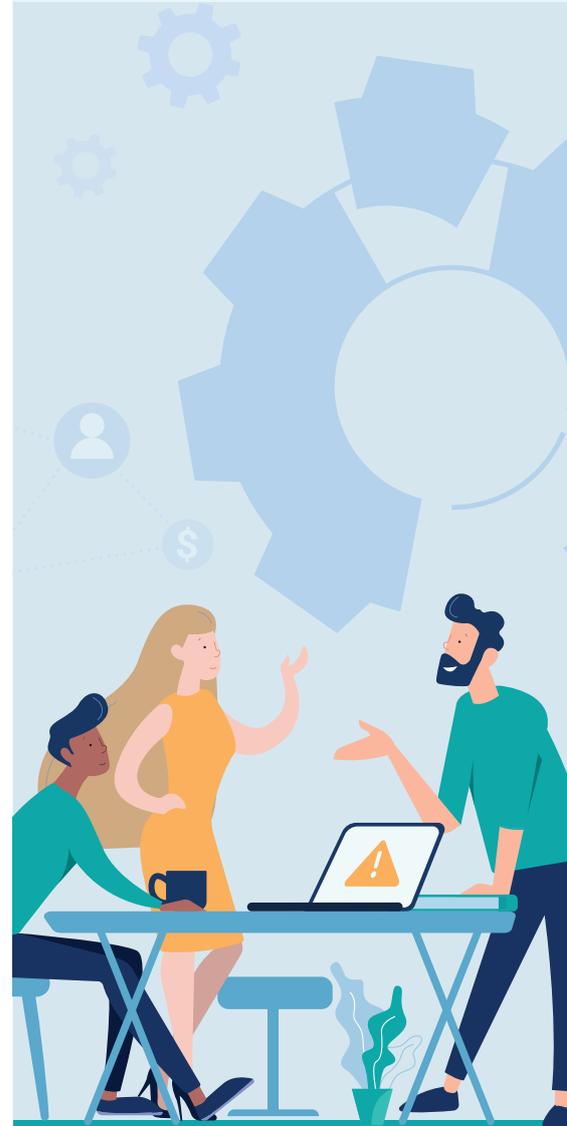
The company started out as a local electricity provider and has become a leading national energy provider. It provides electricity to households and businesses on several continents – with a continuous increase in sustainable sources.

Initial situation

The company's projects, e.g. shutting down a nuclear power plant, are complex and demand a lot of time, skill and precise planning. For the longest time, it managed its projects in Excel. However, with Excel not being a project management tool, its project management capacities are limited and started to cause problems for the project managers. They included a lack of project summaries for resources, duration times and other important details. Resource management and project planning became too difficult to handle in a spreadsheet program.

For the company it is particularly important to keep track of its pipeline and to be able to make precise predictions due to the nature of its projects.

During the project cycle, many documents such as plans, contracts and blueprints are generated and studied. Aside from storing this data, administrating access privileges is a challenge, too. Many documents are highly confidential, and access needs to be strictly controlled. The company had already had SharePoint in place to manage its documents. Integrating it with Dynamics 365 turned out to be highly complex though.



Challenges

The number of projects related to renewable energy sources is constantly growing, for example building offshore wind parks. Internal processes needed to be optimized to be able to manage these projects particularly efficiently. Excel as a makeshift project management solution had to be replaced.

Resource requirements for projects had to become more predictable, too: How many consultants are needed for a project and how long would they be working on it?

Regarding their document management, it was important for the customer to manage collaboration and accesses from within the project. Due to the confidentiality of many documents, security was a particularly important aspect.



Implement project management solution



Improve resource management



Improve collaboration & document management

Solution

proMX supported the company with the implementation of Microsoft Dynamics 365 Sales as well as the project management solution Dynamics 365 Project Service Automation (PSA).

To be able to manage all documents in one place, SharePoint was integrated to Dynamics 365. A modern SharePoint solution for document management that meets the requirements of the company replaced the old solution.

Results

Dynamics 365 Project Service Automation helps the company not only pre-plan projects, but predict resource requirements, too. As soon as a contract is signed, project managers are able to take on a won project immediately and assign employees with the necessary skills to it months or even years prior. During the project status and progress can be controlled in detail at any time. With PSA, the energy provider has a comprehensive overview of its projects and resources.

With a solution specifically tailored to energy companies, the folder structure in SharePoint adapts automatically according to the progress of the project. Access privileges are managed directly in Dynamics 365, too. The coherent folder structure with dedicated privileges all users are able to find important documents easily and quickly.

Example II: Unexpected challenges, unexpected results

The project

- Size:** Large (10,000+ employees)
- Products:**  Dynamics 365 Project Service Automation
- Summary:**  Previously failed implementation of Dynamics 365 Project Service Automation by another IT services provider was completed by proMX
-  A seamless interface with the company's controlling software SAP was developed

About the company

The company is an international and well-established energy provider that produces, trades with and markets energy in more than 40 countries. It is also active on the raw materials market and extracts, stores, transports and delivers natural gas, liquefied natural gas and coal as well as energy-related products. The company has more than 10,000 employees all over the world. Its headquarters are in Germany.

Initial situation

Previously, the company used SAP to store its commercial data and to manage its projects. The complexity of its projects exceeded the system's capabilities though, which is why it asked an IT service provider to implement Microsoft Dynamics 365 Project Service Automation. When the project failed, the company hired proMX to help them complete the software implementation successfully by making only few adjustments – at least that was the plan.



Challenges

The customer wished for standardized processes and a single source of correct data. The entire life cycle of multi-level, complex projects needed to be displayed without gaps. SAP was to remain the primary software, with connections to PSA. A seamless interface needed to be created. The controlling department of the company working with SAP was to be able to edit requests, project suggestions and project orders without problems.

Solution

proMX had to implement the PSA environment from scratch. The plan of adjusting a few things here and there did not work out, because the current solution turned out being too prone to errors. Additionally, a simple implementation of PSA didn't suffice to support the multi-level, complex projects of the company. As a result, proMX carefully adapted the solution to the company, integrated it with the existing SAP system and threaded it into all current workflows.



Standardize
processes



Display complete
project lifecycle



Connect Dynamics 365
& SAP

Results

PSA was implemented within three months. The complex integration with SAP was done with the help of Azure Functions. Project planning now takes place in PSA. After the project approval via an interface developed by proMX the project is exported to SAP. While synchronization with PSA and SAP would take several minutes in the past, it now only takes a few seconds.

The sales team is now able to organize its processes centralized in one app – starting with the lead until project planning, billing, and customer feedback. In addition, all project data is stored centralized in one place, which helps managers make insights-based decisions, for example if a project bid should be pursued or how to optimize resource planning in the long run.



We offer a helping hand in your digital transformation

The ideal digital transformation partner is not only an expert in theory and technology but also in its customer's industry. Our consultants are familiar with the processes, priorities and challenges of different sectors. Contact us!

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