

Microsoft SharePoint Case Study



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Overview

Customer

Home Retail Group

Products and Services

Microsoft SharePoint

Organisation Size

Large (1,000 - 9,999 employees)

Country

United Kingdom

Industry

Retail

Microsoft Partner

Specialist Competency

Wellingtone
PPM Intelligence

Microsoft Partner
Gold Project and Portfolio Management

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Supporting Project and Programme Transformation in a SharePoint Environment for Home Retail Group

Comprising of four major consumer facing brands – Argos, Homebase, Habitat and Financial Services – Home Retail Group is the UK's largest home and general merchandise retailer. The group handles 180 million customer transactions per year across 1,057 stores and more than 80,000 products, making exemplary project and programme management essential to ensure smooth customer service and the ability to flex to future market expectations. Home Retail Group therefore engaged the services of Wellingtone Project Management to move its project management to a new level of maturity, with a particular focus on harnessing the potential of SharePoint on the Office 365 platform for visibility and consistency. Tanya Ofonagoro, Development Manager for the Transformation Office, explains more.

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Tanya Ofonagoro, Development Manager Home Retail Group

Building the Project Management Methodology for Improved Visibility, Consistency and Efficiency

We have been running projects successfully for a number of years across our flagship brands as well as supporting functions such as Contact Centres and Home Delivery” Tanya explains. “But despite already operating sound project practices, there is always room for improvement and we were keen to work further to align our approach to project management and introduce a more consistent way of working. Two years ago we undertook a CEO sponsored audit using P3M3 and the results were sound, scoring an average of level two 2 in almost all areas of the business and a level 3 in one area. But as a forward looking, consumer facing company we recognised that there were things we should be doing better.”

“Although our performance was good, we wanted it to be more coherent. For example, we were operating across multiple locally held templates and working to different and diverse life cycles and objectives. We did have the capacity to address those issues internally, but we felt that an external perspective would add value. We selected Wellingtone because, as well as reviewing and standardising our methodologies, we anticipated the value of adopting SharePoint in the longer term to support those changes. Wellingtone’s experience was precisely aligned to both of these objectives. We also felt very secure with their cost-effective fixed package and pricing structure and felt that there would be no nasty surprises.”

The First Steps: Implementing Standardised Methodology across the Stakeholders

In the first instance, Wellingtone worked with Home Retail Group to establish a new methodology that would meet the evolving needs of the business. “I pulled together a cross functional group of project and programmes experts representing each of our brands and departments” Tanya recalls. “Wellingtone came in to kick off the process with two workshops: the first helped us to flesh out the methodology and the second allowed them to give feedback on their recommendations.”

The First Steps: Implementing Standardised Methodology across the Stakeholders

Having completed this initial process, Wellingtone worked with Home Retail Group to design and implement the new methodology, with a focus on streamlined, practical tools and resources. Once this had been achieved, they designed and delivered one and two day training courses for the project teams to



introduce the new approach. "So far we've trained more than 100 people" says Tanya. "That has been really effective. It's so helpful to be armed with a simple set of tools that we can just pick up and run with, and we have been delighted with user adoption so far. In my day-to-day work I hear and see people advocating for the tools and making practical use of them. They are leaving the training with a sound understanding of the new approach and its value, and they instinctively want to use the tools because they are highly practical and have been designed by us and Wellingtone to be very relevant to our environment."

"The experience with Wellingtone has been completely hassle free. They very quickly get to know your organisation and we have built a very open relationship. They really care about solving our problems so that we can run our projects and programmes better. They are always readily available, open to challenge and debate, and invariably come back with a value-adding response to any query or issue. The whole process has become very natural, and I genuinely see them as our project management partner."

Tanya Ofonagoro, Development Manager, Home Retail Group

An Evolving Process: Implementation of SharePoint for Portfolio-Wide Visibility and Control

Having allowed the first stages to settle in, Home Retail Group was keen to do more. "Currently, the Argos brand is embarking on a transformation programme to reinvent itself as an innovative Digital Retail Leader" Tanya says. "Trying to run a programme of this nature using Excel spreadsheets is unrealistic and hard!. We were aware that we had SharePoint as part of Office 365 and so it made perfect sense to explore what it could do for us."

Wellingtone were again co-opted to facilitate the process. "We started at a strategic level. Wellingtone ran an initial workshop with the senior transformation team to agree what we wanted and needed and nail down that high level scope. We then identified a group of project and programme super users who participated in a more detailed requirements workshop, where we all agreed the finer details of how we wanted SharePoint to deliver in terms of functionality, hierarchy levels and so on."

Following this process, one of Wellingtone's Senior Microsoft Technology Consultants worked closely with Tanya to build the correct SharePoint environment. "In terms of the development, Wellingtone encouraged us to keep it as light touch as possible and that has proved to be sound advice. Because of the size and scope of our projects, it was important to us that the system remained intuitive and usable even after Wellingtone's involvement was completed. In my experience, some suppliers can overwhelm you with all-singing, all-dancing solutions, but Wellingtone has delivered a solution that is refreshingly streamlined and simple whilst at the same time being very powerful. They were very proactive in helping me to decide exactly what we needed, and making sure that we ended up with a stable and easy-to-adopt system that delivers exactly what we require without any unnecessary extras."

The Functionality: The Ability to Achieve More with Less

Within SharePoint, Wellingtone has delivered project site templates that are consistent with the group methodology and allow for easy sharing of reports, data, issues, risks, schedules and more in a central Cloud location. "The advantages are considerable" Tanya confirms. "Instead of relying on requesting data from individuals held in numerous locations and formats, we can now see the status of any project in real time. We can escalate risks to a higher governance level where needed, and the prospect of aligning our reporting and bringing new visibility and consistency to our management of Transformation is very exciting. The result is a highly functional and good looking project and programme site template that is easy to navigate and feeds into an overall Transformation Office level. We're in the process of rollout at the moment. Of course it's a new tool and there will always be users who are nervous about getting to grips with it, but because Wellingtone have kept everything so clean and streamlined it's very intuitive and has been really well received by users so far."

The Functionality: The Ability to Achieve More with Less

Looking forward, Tanya is excited about the capabilities of SharePoint and the potential to develop project and programmes systems further with the adoption of Microsoft Project Online. "The way in which SharePoint has been configured has given us real sustainability and independence. Antonio has built it in such a way that we can not only adopt the current tools easily, we can also create our own tools and templates in the future as our methodology evolves and beds in. Wellingtone has really unlocked the full capability of SharePoint, but without making it heavy or cumbersome. In tandem with the current rollout, I'm now working with Wellingtone to examine a proof of concept around Project Online, which will enhance our ability to do things like roll up and aggregate data. For me it would be great to see the rest of the group jump on board and start adopting what we've developed for Argos. Early discussions suggest that other group stakeholders are equally keen to achieve that."

Tanya is in no doubt that choosing Wellingtone was the correct choice for Home Retail Group. "I would certainly recommend them. The experience has been completely hassle free. They very quickly get to know your organisation and we have built a very open relationship. They really care about solving our problems so that we can run our projects and programmes better. They are always readily available, open to challenge and debate, and invariably come back with a value-adding response to any query or issue. The whole process has become very natural, and I genuinely see them as our project management partner."