

LINKING CORE



VALUES

WITH

STRATEGY

Primavera ProSight helps Ministry Health Care gain greater project visibility, improve its selection process, and pursue its institutional mission. By Anita Saville

Service. Vision. Presence. Justice. These are the four core values upon which Ministry Health Care bases both its overarching business strategies and basic operating decisions. This includes decisions about which IT projects to fund, says Cherian Portz, manager of process, methodology and quality for the Ministry Health Care Project Management Office.

Ministry Health Care, founded in 1984 by the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, is a Catholic-based institution serving patients in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The Ministry Health Care network includes 15 hospitals, aligned clinics, and a variety of other medical providers. With more than 12,000 employees, Ministry also offers home health, hospice and long-term care – as well as dialysis and a health insurance plan.

Since its creation in 2004, the Project Management Office (PMO) at Ministry Health Care has grown from four people to a full-time staff of 13. The office generally manages about 40 launched projects at any time and launches an average three projects each month.

ALIGNING PROJECTS WITH BUSINESS VALUES AND STRATEGIES

As the PMO continued to expand, it became clear that the group had to standardize and improve its processes for project selection and management. Such an overhaul became particularly important with the pending implementation of an Electronic Health Record system (EHR). Ministry Health Care's biggest IT project to date, the new system will let physicians and providers across the network view accurate, up-to-date information on patients and manage their care no matter where those providers tap into the network.

In addition to wanting the complex EHR system to run smoothly – the implementation is expected to span several years and take more than 600,000 hours – the Project Management Office wanted to be sure that this and other projects would advance the Ministry Health Care core values and business strategies. Other initiatives either underway or in

the pipeline include upgrades of patient documentation, an ERP system for human resources records and staff scheduling, several infrastructure projects, and the standardization of Ministry's materials management and financials systems.

"Before implementing Primavera ProSight," Portz says, "we didn't have a good handle on what was coming through the project pipeline or have effective methods for evaluating various initiatives." The company's leadership had lots of good ideas, but decisions to proceed with these initiatives involved too much emotion and too little data, she explains.

The PMO also had difficulty tracking the progress of projects that did move forward. In addition, they lacked the data to evaluate completed projects or the analytical tools to resolve issues encountered while taking on similar projects at other sites. Most project planning and analysis was handled with spreadsheets, which were expensive to keep current and distribute. Version control was also a problem, Portz notes.

SPECIFIC INFORMATION AT EVERY STAGE

The Project Management Office found help with Primavera ProSight portfolio management software, which had already been installed for the Affinity Health System, a regional health care network within the Ministry Health Care family. ProSight provides top-down analysis of both IT and non-IT project portfolios. It is particularly useful for high-level management reporting, offering a complete, up-to-date view of an entire IT project ecosystem, as well as the tools to analyze individual projects.

Having seen the potential offered by ProSight, the PMO found it easy to choose the software for its own use.

"We knew this was a solution that could cure many of our issues," Portz notes. The company's management was particularly impressed with the ability to see specific information about a project in one place – at any stage – through customized investor maps, scorecards and forms.

Users throughout the company have also been impressed by


the ease with which they can customize ProSight to their specific needs. Such flexibility has been especially important in helping Ministry Health Care match its IT projects with specific strategic initiatives that reflect its four core values. With ProSight, the Project Management Office and other users can incorporate those values in presentations that state the business case for various projects and their strategic worth to the company. This helps key decision makers achieve a company-wide balance among the four value areas.

“With ProSight, we can evaluate projects more effectively and systematically,” Portz notes. “It’s still tough to go back to sponsors and say we can’t do their projects. But with ProSight we have the information we need to justify these decisions.”

A FAMILIAR INTERFACE

The ProSight implementation began in 2006 and took about three months. ProSight provided a demo that helped Ministry Health Care match the software to its business processes. (While many of the company’s leaders saw the demo and were involved in designing the new solution, Portz notes that, looking back, involving more people would have helped the company achieve an even greater return on its investment.)

Training has been minimal as ProSight links to the familiar interface of Microsoft Project through Microsoft Project



If, for example, a project is important from a value or strategy perspective, but resources are not immediately available, the software can help leadership identify the need to acquire alternative resources.

Bridge. Project managers post updates in Microsoft Project each week. Data and text pass easily from Microsoft Project to Primavera ProSight, where project status metrics are calculated.

Business process restructuring focused on expanding the information users must gather as part of the project initiation process. It is now clear, from the beginning, what sites within the Ministry Health Care system will likely be impacted during a project, how long the project will last, how many users

must be trained, and how much the project will cost. The new process has gone well, Portz says, because users see the advantage of acquiring quality information up-front.

A MORE MATURE SELECTION PROCESS

Today, some 55 users are using ProSight to improve portfolio management at Ministry Health Care. This includes members of the company’s marketing group, which is tracking its own initiatives through the software.

In addition to the company’s value and strategic goals, managers throughout the network can now see how their project requests measure up in terms of risk.

“Being able to use ProSight as a risk management tool was kind of an ‘aha’ moment for us,” Portz says. “We now have a much better understanding of the specific risks each project involves.” Users can also see how their own projects stack up against other projects that are already in place or coming through the pipeline based on a risk score.

ProSight has also given the project selection process greater flexibility. Where projects were once chosen simply according to the availability of various resources, other factors can now be considered. If, for example, a project is important from a value or strategy perspective, but resources are not immediately available, the software can help leadership identify the need to acquire alternative resources.

“This is much more effective portfolio management than basing project selections on resource availability alone,” says Portz. “In the past, determining whether a project was successful was mostly based on a gut feel from the people involved. Now we can build a more objective evaluation based on actual data.”

The Project Management Office hopes eventually to incorporate a new proprietary protocol for scoring project success into the software that takes into account a project’s cost, use of resources, schedule, scope, objectives and operational impact. Plans also call for upgrading to ProSight 7 and finding new uses for the software, especially around the project closing process.

“We hope to continue expanding our visibility into every project and see how projects rank against each other over time,” Portz adds. “With ProSight, we can leverage portfolios based on the types of projects they include, the sites where they’ve been implemented, and who the project manager is. It’s great to have such a flexible tool that lets you slice information to suit your specific needs.” •

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