

Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki Stosowanej i Zarządzania (Warsaw School of Information Technology under the auspices of the Polish Academy of Sciences)

What does this case study demonstrate?

Modern methods for collection and management of information have been implemented in the organisation. They have allowed the simplification of administrative and accounting procedures as well as to handle students' issues. The use of modern information technology in combination with a user-friendly interface has increased the performance of the administrative and accounting department employees, broadening their range of communication with students and staff. The entity has adapted itself to the non-public school market development trend to use remote communication methods. The idea of the IT system rose from the employees needs to economize time and efforts to be assigned to daily administrative routine. The number of employees is constant while the bureaucratic burden grows. Employees who were asked to propose solutions to the system have been giving advice and working out changes that facilitate their work in the most efficient and ergonomic way.

Workplace innovation elements:

Organisation leader commitment, employee commitment, dialogue and communication, learning and thinking, improvement of the image of the institution, use of modern information and communication technologies.

Context

The Warsaw School of Information Technology (Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki Stosowanej i Zarządzania, WIT) was created in 1996 on the initiative of the Chairman of the Polish Academy of Sciences. The School modernises its study programme on a regular basis. In particular in the area of information technology and computer assisted management. The change in internal data collection and processing system and document circulation result from the need of adaptation to market needs (e.g. remote communication using Internet, official administrative correspondence based on electronic signature). In addition, the school took the opportunity of implementing a modern IT system integrated with a student access control system. The use of modern information technologies resulted in the strengthening of the market position of the school, known as a leader in implementing information technology among higher education centres.

An IT system for staff and student management, integrated with an access control and monitoring system – Modern Management of the WSiSiZ

During the period from September 2012 to August 2014, the project entitled "Modern Management of the Warsaw School of Information Technology" was implemented. The project, co-financed by means of the European Union in the framework of the European Social Fund, was created as a result of consultations with the academic environment. The implementation of the project was initiated, as early as in 2000, by one of the employees of the school – Dr Marcin Inkielman, through the creation of backbone architecture for the School Information Bank. The accomplishment of the project contributed to putting the educational process in order thanks to the use of IT management tools, improvement of administrative management of students issues, as well as the implementation of IT tools: the Electronic Student ID Card

(ELS), PLAGIAT (thesis work management software) and the national electronic register of BA works (KREM) module, guaranteeing the electronic information flow between the school and the ministry. The School Information Bank was additionally expanded by modules that allow monitoring and periodical assessment of selected indexes in order to ensure the school's financial liquidity. What proved to be the most innovative element of the system was its integration with the access control and monitoring system which supported, to a large extent, the security and monitoring inside the buildings of the school. The systems check the traffic of persons in the building and regulate the questions of access to its resources on a current basis, in such a way that it does not require the involvement of third parties. Thanks to this solution, the building service personnel get additional technical support, unauthorised people do not have access to richly equipped IT laboratories, and the lecturers give classes without the need to check attendance or to control student activity during classes. Student activity is registered in the IT system in real time and the lecturers can always verify the educational process for a given student online. All above functionalities have been proposed by groups of employees.

In connection with the implementation of new IT tools, it was necessary to adapt the existing School Information Bank (UBI) to the new modules and train the administrative staff in this area. The training also increased the WIT executive personnel's competency level in school management.

UBI WIT is currently fully computerised system managing information at the School. It consists of two separate services: the UBIK – for candidates for studies, students, graduates and teaching staff, and the UBIA – for all employees. The UBIK service allows, among other things, verification of marks, downloading educational materials, filling in protocols, enrolling to the School, checking financial accounts, configuring account parameters. The UBIA is a system designed for organizational unit managers, dean's office personnel and teaching staff. Thanks to the implementation of the above-mentioned solutions, there was an improvement in administrative and accounting services for employees. The number of mistakes, errors and conflict situations arising from erroneous implementation of processes got reduced. In addition, the system made it possible to process the student's issues online through a virtual dean's office; this, in consequence, reduced the responsibilities of administrative and accounting personnel. The creation of the UBI also allowed the collection of a repository of the entity employees scientific and professional output: a repository of knowledge created within the school.

The end result of the project implementation is the improvement of labour conditions for employees, giving direct access to the entity's resources 24h/7 days a week. A reduction of the number of mistakes and conflict situations, increased flexibility and a greater transparency of information collected. The employees have an opportunity of free expression of their opinion on the adjustment of the UBI for the needs of the administrative and accounting system and on the interface friendliness. Comments on how to improve the functioning of the system and its particular applications are communicated directly to the system manager, without the need to observe the hierarchy of positions.

Who benefits?

The employees – improvement of labour conditions for employees, direct access to the entity's resources 24h/7 days a week, flexible possibilities of work. Workers have greatly reduced the amount of administrative and official burden to be completed manually. Amount of overtime hours has been reduced. Risk of human factor errors has declined which consequently reduces the feeling of stress among employees.

The students – have direct and remote contact with the school, access to administrative processes and educational resources, contact with tutors. Registration of student activity on school servers guarantees full transparency of information and actions associated with each student, allowing their impartial verification and control by all the parties concerned.

The image of the school – implementation of modern IT solutions assisting the educational process and communication between the school, students and the labour market.

Prognosis

The entity is perceived as a centre offering quality educational services. At the same time, the nature of IT studies gives it the image of a demanding school. The implementation of modern digital and communication technologies will contribute to the softening of its image and to the implementing of practices which will improve the students training in response to qualifications and skills necessary on the labour market. The IT system, supported by the access control system, will significantly facilitate communication between the school and the student at all the levels of relations: from correspondence, through remote accomplishment of study programme, to the checks of student attendance to classes.