

Managing a Proof of Technology Project

Background

The client is the IT Strategy & Architecture department of a major pharmaceutical company.

Following a costly and time consuming deployment of Windows Vista, the S&A group had been requested to develop a desktop strategy that would significantly reduce the impact of future operating system upgrades. Having developed a strategy based on Desktop Virtualisation (VDI), the S&A group were seeking to prove the virtualisation technologies within their own environment.

Our brief was to take over from the current Project Manager (who had to leave at short notice) and manage the Proof of Technology (PoT) project including infrastructure installation, software configuration and user testing of the prototype service. The project had just started.

What We Did

Initially we met with all the vendors and internal departments involved in the project to establish the necessary activities to deliver the PoT environment. A work programme was developed and daily teleconferences held to monitor the rapid installation of the environment.

The major challenge was obtaining the support and input of service vendors necessary to deliver services to a project with a small budget and which was outside the "normal" service agreements; this was overcome by keeping the service providers involved, demonstrating the mutual benefits of success and, where necessary, escalation.

With the infrastructure build underway we then:

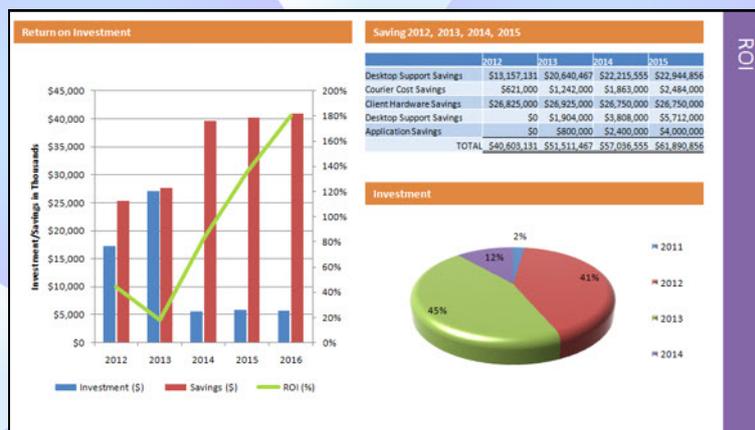
Established the critical success factors (CSFs) for the Proof of technology project.

- Developed a Communications Plan to include communications for project sponsors and stakeholders as well as users and technicians involved in the testing of the service.
- Identified and briefed a suitable sample of end users who would take part in the testing.
- Developed an online, survey-based feedback process that would demonstrate whether the CSFs had been fulfilled.
- Met device vendors to obtain a range of sample end user devices (SmartPhones, Tablets, Laptops and Thin Clients) for use during the testing.

Once the infrastructure and configuration was completed, test users were allowed to access the test environment on a phased basis.

Once the testing process was underway, we initiated a number of activities to ensure the CSFs were successfully achieved and to enable the client to move to the next stage of their Virtualisation strategy:

- Monitored user activity, managed issue resolution and collected feedback.
- Assisted S&A in development of a "Vision" document.
- Undertook a "Lessons Learned" review with the technical resources and vendors who had built the test environment.
- Prepared a "Findings" document based on user survey feedback, anecdotal responses and lessons learned.
- Planned and scheduled a mid-test redevelopment of the environment to address a number of the issues raised to date and allow additional vendors to demonstrate their products.
- Organised a two-day workshop with project staff and potential vendors; established a deployment programme scope, outline plan and costing.
- Developed a full Business Case of costs and intangible as well as tangible benefits.



Results

- The Proof of Technology was completed successfully and the trial service met the CSFs applicable to it.
- The project raised organisation-wide awareness of the strategy and developed widespread support for the initiative. The delivery and functionality of the service was greatly praised by users. All of these further reinforced the business case.
- The full Business Case was delivered to the business, along with a plan for global deployment, enabling the proposal to be submitted to the organisation's decision making process.