

**DEUTSCHE ASSET MANAGEMENT:  
BUSINESS FOCUS FOR PROCESS RE-ENGINEERING**

With over 3,500 staff in 20 offices throughout the world managing \$600 billion for clients from 60 countries, Deutsche Asset Management has over 400 investment professionals striving to deliver the highest level of investment expertise.

The actual quality, skills and abilities of the company's staff – not just the investment professionals – are absolutely crucial in maintaining and improving client services. In a highly competitive and constantly changing marketplace, inculcating and developing such skills is real challenge that any company in the financial sector ignores at its peril.

With the plethora of Associates and training organisations, it might be assumed that resourcing such skill development presented few difficulties. However, that is frequently not the case. All companies are different, with their own unique requirements and many training firms offer standard courses that can often fail to satisfy all a client's training needs.

An example is Deutsche Asset Management's London-based UK Region office, where there was a perceived need for raising skill levels in business process analysis in a number of the company's departments, including trade processing, performance and back-office operations.

"I had very specific requirements for the course," says DeAM director of Business Consulting and Performance Peter Ellis, "but encountered difficulty in resourcing this externally. Most such business process analysis courses are heavily IT-oriented and make the assumption that the analysis is leading to the development of an IT system. That seems to be the way process analysis training has developed – too closely coupled to the IT industry. All the training options we looked at had the same kind of IT orientation which really didn't address our needs which included many non-IT issues."

The overall objective was to help the staff undergoing training to better analyse their working procedure and the way they did their job, identify potential enhancements and improve their performance.

"Essentially we wanted a course that was appropriate for business rather than IT people, and people working across a wide spectrum of job categories and from a variety of backgrounds," says Ellis. "The core requirement was a focus on business processes and transfer of skills to real people working in the real business world – something that would provide insights and background into the techniques and enable those people to make real improvements in the way they analysed and redesigned business processes".

After a review of available courses – most too IT-focused and many too standard to address the identified DeAM needs – Stehle Associates was selected to develop a specially tailored workshop. “We chose Stehle because they had a track record in producing such tailored material and because one of the principals had actually worked for DeAM in the past and was familiar with our environment and business culture,” says Ellis”.

Based initially on an established business analysis course, the workshop was tailored by Stehle jointly with Ellis. “I knew I could easily explain the issues and that Stehle would be able to redesign it to meet the challenge. Together we removed many of the IT elements and tuned the material to focus on our processes and the requirements of the different learners. They went away to interpret our brief and came back with precisely the material we needed – and structured to meet our course time preferences”.

The essence was a practical, real world focus on such elements as identifying bottlenecks where, for example, a delay is built into a process because we are channelling too many transactions through a team or individual, and where we might be duplicating work and wasting resource. Others include where DeAM have similar tasks and processes that follow different procedures. “Standard procedures was an important topic,” says Ellis, “and we wanted to empower people to identify where it was an issue and needed change and where it wasn’t and didn’t”.

At the same time, the tailored course addressed the fact that learners worked in different departments and each had its own special needs. “For example,” says Ellis, “the trade processing department work to very tight deadlines. When we buy or sell assets like shares, then we agree a trade with a broker in the market and with a market dealer on the trade – what assets, how much and when the trade is to take place. The trade processing department has to ensure the trade is completed correctly. If they fail there will be a financial penalty. We wanted staff in the department to be able to meet deadlines more effectively, with few mistakes, and to do that the needed to be able to analyse the processes themselves and develop a solution if the process needed changing”.

On the other hand, the task of the performance department was to complete a large-scale business processes re-engineering project to improve the complete department process. This involved the collection of a lot of data, and different requirements for the analysis of different data categories. The re-engineering need is driven by the industry’s rapid change and there is a constant pressure to streamline to meet the every growing need to provide more detail.

For yet another department, the back-office operations, there was underway a re-engineering to improve processes to bring down costs and reduce time taken.

“The approach of the course was very much hands-on,” says Ellis, “with case studies and exercises relating to the different categories of learners who attended separate course sessions – though each variant focused on business modelling techniques, identifying issues and problems, cost analysis, process redesign, costing and identifying benefits of redesign”.

First to take the course were 8 people from trade processing, followed subsequently by 4 from performance, and finally 10 from back-office operations. “Each was followed by an informal review of how effective the learners felt the material and approach had been and all believed it had fulfilled its role and significantly raised skill levels,” says Ellis.

“The bottom line is that we have achieved a real benefit from the exercise – it has significantly helped real users conceptualise working procedures more effectively and intelligently and model reprocessing. It is often assumed that IT will solve problems, but there is often a cheaper, easier and quicker solution through remodelling processes, often manual ones. However, effective change management is crucial and the course has moved us significantly in the right direction.