Planisware CAE

How Planisware Transformed Project Management

In the fast-paced world of global technology, CAE stands tall as a powerhouse. Specializing in software-based simulation training and critical operations support solutions for aviation and defense & security, they've made it their mission to enhance safety, efficiency, and effectiveness in these high-stakes industries.

Meet Daniel Normand, CAE's Senior Project Manager, a man who's seen it all in the realm of aerospace and defense. He's been at the forefront of CAE's journey, sharing how Planisware, the integrated project portfolio management tool, revolutionized their project management landscape.

CHALLENGES? OH, PLENTY!

Before the Planisware era, CAE faced a monthly ordeal known as the EAC Review (estimate at completion). Picture this: juggling financial data from various systems, none of which played nice with the others. The result? A data extraction dance that felt more like a circus act. Not to mention the tedious double-entry process, an open invitation for discrepancies to crash the party. All of this was neatly assembled in the dreaded Excel spreadsheets.

Daniel vividly remembers the Excel days and laughs, "We eventually grew out of the Excel capabilities and had to move to a database format to be able to maintain

that size of data. It was also due to the complexity of the manipulation. It was very error-prone and labor-intensive."

"We'd wrap up one cycle and start the next one right away," he adds. That relentless cycle often led to errors and frantic last-minute fixes, with deadlines looming like storm clouds.

"But wait, there's more!" Daniel continues. "We had separate scheduling tools and resource loading tools that were completely independent of that data set."

The NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) program is managed by CAE.

ENTER PLANISWARE: A GAME CHANGER

So, what made CAE look for a solution? Daniel explains, "We had embarked on the implementation of our ERP system from Oracle. We were adding the project accounting module, which is not a very user-friendly environment for project managers to handle projects."

"We knew we needed an operational project management tool as a layer on top of that module," he adds, "because if it's painful for users to enter and interpret data, then it's not going to be inviting for users."

KEY FACTORS TO DISAMBIGUATING COMPLEXITY

"It was a very large undertaking," says Daniel. "It was a project that had a lot of attention and dedication, with people from the business heavily involved to make sure their requirements were considered."
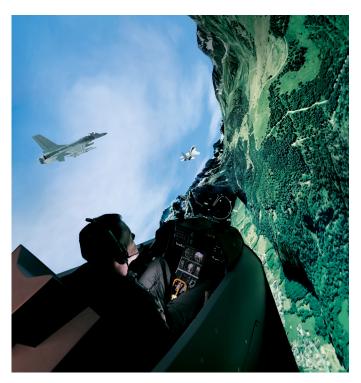
Planisware introduced features like work packages, allowing project managers to delegate tasks effectively. "It's a bottom-up system," explains Daniel. "Today, Planisware is the input system for project managers, work package managers, and resource managers to analyze cost collection from Oracle."

And what about data integration, the backbone of Planisware's power? "Our HR data directly interfaces with Planisware," says Daniel. "The rest of the system is integrated via our main ERP foundation. Everything is synchronized to ensure data accuracy, trust, and reliability."

IN ACTION: EFFICIENCY UNLEASHED

Once Planisware was in full swing, the CAE team saw remarkable changes.

1. **Efficiency:** Data integration and streamlined processes significantly reduced manual work. The team had more time for project delivery and less time spent wrangling data.

2. **Data Accuracy:** Planisware became the single source of truth for all project-related forecasting data, enhancing accuracy throughout the project lifecycle.

3. **Cost Control:** CAE gained better control over project costs, simplifying budget management.

4. **Improved Collaboration:** Planisware's integration capabilities broke down silos, facilitating collaboration among different departments, contractors, and suppliers.

CAE completed the acquisition of L3Harris' Military Training business in 2021.

DATA INTEGRATION: WAS A REAL GAME CHANGER

CAE's data integration is a vital part of their success story. Workday, Oracle E-Business, and Workforce systems provide a seamless flow of data. This real-time integration allows CAE to gain a unified view of project information, resource management, and cost control.

ESTIMATION MODULE: A BID AND PROPOSAL MARVEL

CAE also make the most of Planisware's estimation module to enhance their bids and proposals process. This feature allows for easy estimate creation and scenario analysis. It simplifies catalog item categorization, making project bids more competitive and precise.

CHANGE MANAGEMENT: THE UNSEEN HERO

The world of change management was something new for some participants in the implementation project. It played a pivotal role in the successful implementation of Planisware. It included an extensive team dedicated to workshops, communication, and training materials. As Daniel discovered, change management is an aspect that should never be underestimated in such a significant project.

REPORTING AND ANALYTICS: THE POWER OF CHOICE

CAE uses a mix of Planisware's dashboards and external BI tools, like Power BI and DOMO for reporting. The choice depends on the freshness and sensitivity of the data. Planisware allows users to access live data for real-time decisions, while external BI tools are used for less time-sensitive reporting.

THE GRAND UNVEILING: HOW LONG DID IT TAKE?

The transformation wasn't an overnight wonder. When they prepared to implement Planisware alongside the ERP system, CAE took the time necessary to prepare their change management strategy and integration, about a year. When it came to deployment, CAE chose the 'big bang' approach, where they bid farewell to old systems and ushered in the new, all over a single weekend.

IN CONCLUSION

While CAE continues to be a key player in the tech world, they're looking to explore further enhancements and unlock even more of Planisware's capabilities. The aim? To keep the engine of improvement running, enhance their engineering project management practices and maintain a smooth flight ahead. With Planisware on their side, CAE's future looks promising, efficient, and accurate. The sky's not the limit—it's just the beginning.