
Case Study 6: New Product Development System

Who:

The company creates specialized hardware / software workflow management systems used by customers worldwide.

Situation:

The company has a long-established custom development business. Each of its customers around the world has broadly similar needs, but requires a custom solution with unique features and workflows. For years, the company successfully used an expensive full custom development and support. To meet customer demands for lower cost solutions, the company decided to build standard products that they could integrate to meet the unique needs of each customer and could sell to new channels such as VARs and integrators.

Developing standard products that have a consistent architecture and are easily reusable and customizable is very different from custom development. Recognizing this, the company asked Synergy to assess its capabilities and help it design a product development system that would succeed in its unique culture and niche market.

Solution:

Synergy assessed existing development capabilities and gaps, and then identified key areas for change. Working closely with the company, Synergy designed a streamlined new product development system that specifically addressed its unique needs. The system has four key parts:

1. Empowered and accountable cross functional development teams that work across silos
2. Lightweight project framework shared by all organizations working on new products
3. Senior management forum that ensures communication, coordination, and tracking
4. Architecture and technology teams that create a unified product architecture and a continuing stream of new technology

Synergy didn't stop with a paper solution. We were an active partner in implementation and change management, making sure that the solution addressed cultural barriers and stayed flexible in ever-changing circumstances. We provided training, coaching, and communication.

Result:

Projects got done that never would have been successfully completed in the past. The company saw benefits that directly improved cost, schedule and quality:

- Clear leadership and accountability for each project using the system
- More effective project decisions, escalation and roadblock removal
- Reduced confusion, better communication and joint action across functional silos
- Better handling of emergencies and surprises
- Up front definition of requirements and design, reducing frequent design changes
- A product roadmap, with clearer decisions on which projects to do and not do