It was a corporate equivalent of installing an aircraft engine in midair. Drop a tool, miss a deadline, and the problems could spiral out of control. Our client—a global biotech company—needed to implement a new model for delivering back-office finance and HR support while acquiring a company that itself was in the midst of being spun off into a separate company. The scope was broad and complex: bring businesses together, integrate IT systems and shared service centers, consolidate enterprise resource planning systems, recruit employees, design and implement a strategy to deliver internal business services, and build a technology platform for future growth. The contractual deadlines were intense. The margin for error was nonexistent.

Our client realized the benefits of a well-defined, well-governed global business services delivery model that provides back-office finance and HR support for thousands of employees in dozens of countries. The company was able to handle a significantly higher volume of support, consolidate service centers, manage costs effectively, and anticipate and address future technology issues.

**Client challenge**

Creating global business service centers—and then moving work from other locations into the centers—is complex and requires robust project-management capabilities to ensure the knowledge is captured and transferred, processes are defined, and governance is established.

**Manage the people side**

Many of the people involved in creating a global business service delivery model will go through a career change. Some will transfer, some will take on new roles and some will leave the company. Ensure that projects have an experienced change-management team in place.

**Move with precision**

Any migration of work is complex and requires strong project management, but a major project that is operating under contractual deadlines such as a transition service agreement requires precision, decisiveness, and the know-how of leaders who have been involved in many similar projects.
Creating a global business services function during a merger or divestiture is challenging, but doing so for a company acquiring a business that itself was in the midst of being spun off created many unique complexities.

At its most basic level, the project involved moving locations where work took place—capturing knowledge about existing processes, transferring that knowledge to new locations, and then launching and stabilizing new centers. Our client had been managing service centers in the United States and Europe, while a separate center elsewhere in Europe was being phased out. Additional complexities came from issues in system access and data separation that was not yet completed between the parent and spinoff prior to the work consolidation.

We assembled a cross-functional team of experienced experts, rolled up our sleeves, and got to work managing the project’s many interrelated activities and defining the structure, processes, and governance for service-delivery centers. We collaborated closely with our client and another consulting firm on the complex project. Our role included:

— Managing work streams that included knowledge capture and transfer
— Transferring work from one service center to another and building a separate center from the ground up. The centers support multiple functions and locations
— Identifying and creating the IT infrastructure, systems, and applications
— Defining the governance structure
— Project management
— Creating a cross-functional team that included experts in people and change management, enterprise solutions, procurement, finance, and shared services
— Anticipating and escalating potential issues and recommending solutions before the issues become problems
— Providing on-site leadership to a legacy service center that was being closed.

If you are interested in learning more about this case study, or if you are experiencing similar issues, please contact us.

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