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Rationalising a fragmented IT support service

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Our client, the UK division of a global logistics business, had made a number of acquisitions. As a result, its support services - including IT - were somewhat fragmented. Another issue was the need to increase shareholder value. The key to this, in an industry with little organic growth, was cost reduction and the creation of leaner operations. One possible solution was to follow the lead of some of the company's other divisions, which had shifted IT support to the new global IT division located in the Czech Republic. However, the advantages for the UK operation of doing this were unknown.

Workforce reaction feared

The board wanted answers but was concerned about the potential reaction of the UK workforce – particularly if this involved the loss of key individuals – before any decisions had been taken. Our challenge was therefore to:

-create a plan to gather information without alienating the workforce;
-understand the role, responsibilities and costs of the IT support service;
-document the findings to create a picture of the current support model; and
-work with the Czech data centre team to create a future support model.

Detailed planning

The project was broken down into several steps with approval at each stage:

What does the service look like today? What could it look like tomorrow? What are the implications and actions required if a change is advantageous? If the change is advantageous, implement it. Review and fine-tune as necessary.

Next, we spotlighted as key people certain individuals who had previously been successfully involved with and supportive of change. We planned each of the above steps in detail, and presented the board with a proposal that would both rationalise the fragmented IT support operations and generate substantial savings.

£3m annual savings

The board approved our proposal, and we helped the company to implement it. Moving the IT support arm of the business to the Czech data centre brought savings of £3m a year. Redundancies did occur within the UK, and we worked closely with local human resources teams to ensure that those affected received full support.