



# Siemens ARGO Program

## Corporate innovation

### Executive Summary

Siemens Turkey introduced the 'Corporate Innovative Projects' initiative in form of an internal project completion (named ARGO). This program's main objective was to instigate "out of the box ways" of managing short term internal projects with a view to improve end-to-end project performance across the organization, while also helping employees improve their project management skills by exposing them to project management challenges such as scope development, scheduling, planning and stakeholder engagement.



### Introduction

Siemens Turkey is a company which global power house in electrical engineering and electronics. They develop and manufacture products, design and install complex systems and projects, and tailor a wide range of services for individual requirements. Over the years GBMC built a long-term business relationship to support Siemens' Learning and Development activities in portfolio development, Program/Project management areas. More recently GBMC was engaged to support Siemens Turkey's company wide project management skills development program in 2014. This new engagement presented the opportunity for GBMC to introduce and implement its "mentorship based learning" program, which is geared towards developing innovative and sophisticated solutions for Siemens Turkey in order to set the scene for future entrepreneurial, well-defined, client-focused, corporate innovative projects within Siemens.



# Siemens ARGO Program: Corporate innovation

## Situation

Corporate innovative projects are useful to harvest new ideas from fresh internal brain power and also let staff to take responsibility and develop themselves. In return, the company benefits by having a pool of fresh ideas to implement, and enable staff to develop themselves throughout the process.

4 different project groups adopted 4 different themes. Throughout the course of project competition, team members reviewed new marketing trends, dealt with ever changing customer tendencies & line productivity issues, considered ways of adopting agile approaches, creating new marketing models & channels and up skilling their presentation skills. GBMC Consultancy was asked by Siemens Turkey to support the ARGO program and to lead the Learning & Development side of this project competition.

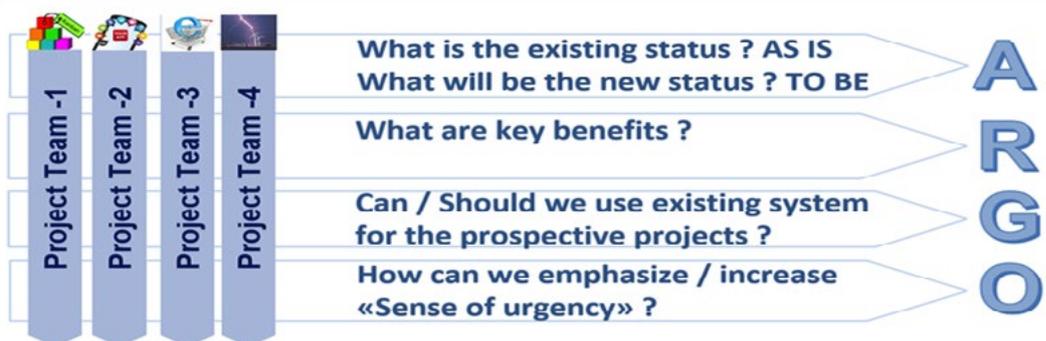
Siemens Turkey appointed a senior sponsor for each project team with single point accountability for new initiatives was also adopted for this project completion. During the planning phase project team members showed enthusiasm for empowerment and "flexibility" to complete their projects, as they had to deliver this project competition on top of their daily workload.

## Solution:

3 approaches can be outlined & adopted to accomplish 4 different projects within short period of time.

- Tailored mentorship program unique to each team should effectively be directed by program mentor
- Unique Project Execution / Project Tools should be used by each team
- Team Formation stages must be led sensitively

### Project Maturity



## Siemens ARGO Program: Corporate innovation

### Application

Under the mentorship program, project teams adopted the approach to work in small iterations, collecting feedback, and evolving the plans accordingly, and ensured that the project strategy complies with company policy & vision. Failure to do so could have resulted in project delays, and strategy re-alignment, inconsistencies during the course of the project.

During the early risk-assessment phase a number of potential risks were identified:

- Poorly defined project premises and justification of objectives
- Failure to prepare a stakeholder list and an alignment plan
- Project team members could be hesitant to engage with the stakeholders in senior positions
- Scope is not clearly defined or weak business case
- Employee turnover may negatively affect workload & work balance within the project team
- Availability of resources, as critical program resources were usually organized by line managers annually and committed in advance.
- Poor financial estimation

Project teams evaluated quantitative and qualitative benefits, in order to check the completeness of the project plan and set the reliable metrics such as:

- Organization's Success — Market share, new products, new technology
- Project Team's Success — Loyalty, development, satisfaction
- Customer's Success — Customer satisfaction criteria (needs met, deliverables used)
- Meeting arrangements — Cost, schedule, and specifications met



### Project Execution / Project Tools

A "single and unique" Project Management Template was used at the execution phase. The aim was to make work visible, so that problems could be understood & recorded properly as soon as they appear. Single template consisted of a project charter, gantt charts, open item tracking lists and risk channel maps.

Project kick off phase premises included the following key areas:

- Simplifying the processes and the tools without any "nice to haves" and
- Increase "teamness" in and among the project teams

The implicit information in the company is hidden in peoples' heads and in computers. With the help of Project Management Tracking Tool, visibility smoothly increased through dashboards and consequently engagement of stakeholders with the project team resulting in increased support on the "stalled" areas.

During the mentoring sessions, with the help of the tracking tool, project team members were able to identify opportunities and deal with problems before they arise. For instance, approval of purchase order for a third party work was identified as a bottleneck and was resolved in collaboration with the IT department, thanks to the tracking tool, by simply introducing routine meetings with the IT team.

Towards the end of the program, there was visible recognition by the Project sponsor, as they could see the project teams improved ability to proactively dealing with risks and issues in a timely manner.

## Siemens ARGO Program: Corporate innovation

Below issues were identified during the execution phase of the mentoring sessions mainly due to time pressure and competing priorities:

- Setting a well-defined project charter
- Coping with inadequate resources
- Establishing realistic deadlines
- Eliminate unclear goals & directions
- Estimating planning phase stage gates and related deliverables in detail
- Achieving commitment from the team members
- Managing vendors & subcontractors
- Managing changes in scope, contents and goals
- Managing stakeholders
- Resolving conflict among departments
- Performing periodic critical health checks

### Team Formation

Team work is important in a collaborative project as it enhances the efficiency of the team and offers the company as well as the staff to become more familiar with each other and also learn how to work together.

Senior stakeholders support the development of people by increasing their autonomy in solving problems and improving their independence gradually. Project members developed their autonomy with other stakeholders by addressing issues, making right decisions and by applying problem-solving methods during the course of the project.

Another point was to embed key behaviours such as trust worthiness, flexibility, high morale, confidence and supportiveness throughout project groups during the mentorship sessions. Otherwise, without the synergy gained by these soft factors, it would have been very challenging to finish an innovation project by the team members voluntarily, with hearts and minds committed, within such a short period of time (6 months).



Mentoring program underpinned the team to come out its core capabilities and expedite progress, regardless of company's reporting lines and hierarchy. With the help of mentorship approach, it is prevented disconnection between strategy & project execution and aligned team behaviours towards the needs of stakeholders, used team diversity as a strong side, addressing program risks as early as possible and ensure a successful end-result. Knowing that motivated individuals make better projects to run faster, it is also focused on team motivation factors such as getting valuable project information from outside easily, to enable the team to act faster at various phases.

It is important to understand the critical success factors not only for the business but also for the project team members. To be a likeable mentor, especially for Y-generation or X and Y together in the same team. Some of the mentorship success ingredients can be considered a mix of the below factors;

- Respect the project teams' unique identity
- Develop a personal touch for each member at least meet once a month
- Emphasize the importance of project outcomes
- Manage competitiveness among project teams
- Nurture a constructive cross "team competition", similar to a game
- Build close relationships with project team members
- Keep all team members in the same communication line, such as what's up group, trello etc.
- Address conflict & disputes in a timely manner
- Receive "team commitment" at the very beginning of project

From mentoring point of view, the key success factor is being able to amalgamate all of the above points to gain team consensus as early as possible on the way to success.



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### Impact

Project groups have really enjoyed being involved in this type of an innovation project competition within Siemens Turkey. Project team member feedback is summarised below:

- ✔ Project teams were able to demonstrate excellent communication skills
- ✔ Project teams had the ability to handle multiple tasks and responsibilities together
- ✔ Project teams had a logical approach to problem solving and were able to develop conceptual thinking skills
- ✔ Team members enjoyed working in a fast-changing and competitive environment



In this program, successful team members did not only embrace change, but also initiated it by finding new ways to accomplish their goals. They focused on the project kick-off, sought easy implementation areas to achieve quick wins and put in a lot of personal hard work and long hours, while still able to develop themselves in the process and enjoy the journey. From a "lessons learned" perspective, as the final word, it can be said that for corporate innovative projects is not just about "staff development" by playing roleplaying in an imaginary game scenario, "but also about "delivering a project" that is real and tangible.

#### GROUP ①

Lean management principles are newly defined for designated manufacturing areas, way of work positively changed, improvement in inventory and saving in stocks.

#### GROUP ②

Mobile application development, new sales channel was established, expectation in sales considerably increased in case of continuing following phases.

#### GROUP ③

Establishing a new e-commerce platform, well-managed partnership relations, contribution to digitalization.

#### GROUP ④

Managing risk and intellectual property proactively, pioneering in market position.

With my warm regards,

Principal Consultant  
Ercan CIHAN