

A well defined and implemented Quality Process leads a Canadian company to a leadership position in the Microsoft Partner IT Asset Management space



"Provance develops software for the highly process-centric IT asset management discipline. The Quality solution had to reflect what we believed were the best practices in our industry. It had to be simple, visual and easily followed. By validating our process definition to make sure we did not miss important requirements of the ISO 9001 Standard, BSI facilitated the design of our system. The benefits of implementing the BSI solution include greater market access, compliance benefits, risk reductions, process improvements, competitive differentiation, and overall brand reputation benefits."

Gilles Lalonde
President & CEO, Provance Technologies

Customer needs

- Creating software solutions demands a lot of discipline, communication and collaboration. Provance wanted to establish recognition for the quality of its products and high level of Quality Control. In the highly competitive software industry it is critical to hit the target the first time around and limit redesigns caused by poor controls.
- The Quality solution had to reflect what Provance believed were the best practices in the industry. It had to be simple, visual and easily followed.

Customer benefits

- ISO Certification made it easier to prove to large corporations that Provance was a serious and capable organization
- Well run Software development projects.
- Benefits of ISO 9001 Implementation included greater market access, compliance benefits, risk reductions, process improvements, competitive differentiation, and overall brand enhancement.

Customer Background:

- Provance Technologies Inc. creates and sells IT Asset Management software solutions for the Microsoft System Center market.
- Their typical clients are medium to large enterprise clients.
- Provance head office is in Gatineau Quebec, Canada but sells to over 23 countries around the world.
- Their customers are organizations that are highly dependent on their IT technologies and want to manage the full life cycle of their IT assets and software License agreements
- Provance is the true enterprise category leader of IT Asset management solutions for Microsoft System Center

The Key offerings of the organization are:

- Provance has been in the IT Asset Management market for over 17 years.
- Mature understanding of their clients' real challenges to manage large IT assets inventories coupled with the

challenge of staying compliant with their Software licensing agreements with their suppliers.

- Solutions are available in English, French, German and Russian (Other languages to come).

Strategic direction of organization

- Provance is dedicated to supplying best of breed software solutions to complement the Microsoft System Center Suite of Products.

Needs / Drivers / Challenges faced by your Organization

- Creating software solutions demands a lot of discipline, communication and collaboration. Provance wanted to establish recognition for the quality of its products and the highest level of Quality Control. In the software industry there is also significant competitive advantage in the ability to hit the target the first time around and limit the redesigns caused by poor controls. The Quality solution had to reflect what Provance believed were the best practices in the industry. It had to be simple, visual and easily followed.

Steps Taken to Find a Solution

- The first step was to define the processes required to properly control a development project from first idea to the general availability of the product.
- Next, the decision was made to extend the quality system to other areas of the company such as sales, finance, HR and governance.
- Workflow charts were created to visually represent the processes they wanted to implement and follow.
- The ISO-9001 standard was selected because it allowed the flexibility and the control needed without adding too much complexity to daily operations.

The BSI Solution

When the time came for Certification of the system, an employee recommended BSI. This staff member had worked as an internal auditor at a previous company and had been impressed with BSI: the experience working with them had been very positive.

BSI has been the Certification Body since the inception of the Quality Management System. However, Provance also brings in a consultant on an annual basis to perform an internal compliance audit before the BSI Auditors come in and do their yearly audit and validation of the process, to ensure conformity with the standard.



Implementation

Provance sought to establish a Quality Management System to meet the ISO standard, and asked BSI to validate and comment on the proposed system. Already very close at Stage 1, Provance just needed to review the standard and add a couple of features and they were ready to go. (Doug Phillips of BSI was the Auditor). They created visual charts – with all involved, quality documents, events, reviews, audit timetable, list all of the participants and links to other processes. Management approval was part of the process. There were 47 processes in total – covering all the steps from planning, marketing, product development, research, finance, etc.

Internal Implementation and the Provance Process Management Framework

Once Provance believed that the system was ready to introduce to the employees, they scheduled a presentation to explain the reasons for the system and how to go about understanding the different processes for each Shared Service Centre. Provance has a Matrix organizational structure called the Provance Process Management Framework (PMF) – something very unique to their organization. All employees belong to shared service centres – so all can play a role in multiple processes (i.e.: an employee can play a role in sales, marketing, and finance functions, if he/she has the competency).

They configured Microsoft SharePoint and Track product to publish internal process details and to capture proof of compliance. Microsoft Team Foundation Server was deployed for the management of the Provance development process, and Microsoft Dynamics was used for Sales operations (quotations, estimates, approvals, closed won, client support).

Process Improvement

From the beginning, the first procedure that Provance wanted to focus on was the “Process Improvement Process”. They understood that a few months operating under the new quality management system would uncover where they needed to improve, in order to make the system more efficient and achieve industry best practices level.

However, a new protocol was created to control the process improvement framework. No one person can change a process just because he/she thinks it is better. There is a complete process improvement protocol in place and no changes are made without strict adherence to it. There are steps to be followed; for example: identification of issue, OFI (opportunity for improvement) created, review by managers of group, finally, executive review. Only then is a change made, and then it is a group decision.



Employee Engagement and Participation

At first, some employees did not understand why the rigorous adherence to the processes, but they became keen on the system very rapidly, and became strong supporters of the new and innovative quality system.

Development Process

The development process was easier than expected because Provance already documents their processes, so conformance to the ISO 9001 standard was simplified.

In the software industry, business cycles are a fact of life. It is tempting when trying to accelerate development of a software solutions to justify “cutting corners” but they were able to get consensus that the best approach was to do it right the first time and limit re-designs caused by misunderstandings.

Overcoming Obstacles

Any obstacles were easily conquered by regular reinforcement that processes were important and making it clear that compliance was not optional. Indeed, part of Employee evaluations includes compliance to the Quality process.

ISO Certification

Internally, there was a dedicated internal ISO auditor identified to manage the process and follow requirements in order for the system to become ISO 9001 certified. The system was managed online through SharePoint and Visio.

BSI facilitated the Certification Journey by validating the process development, to make sure Provance did not miss any important steps along the way. The timing was very quick, from first design to Certification took only three months.

Benefits of Implementation and working with BSI

Now that the ISO Certification and Quality Management System are in place, Provance has achieved its original strategic objectives. A strong competitive advantage and significant brand credibility allows them the ability to prove to larger organizations that Provance is a significant player in the IT Asset Management space. Well run and effective software development projects are another benefit of the QMS.

The benefits of the BSI solution include

1. Market access
2. Compliance benefits
3. Risk reduction
4. Competitive differentiation benefits
5. Process improvements
6. Benefits to the brand reputation

A record of Excellence and the BSI Award of Excellence

The Provance QMS has now taken on a life of its own: employees understand and accept it; it brings clarity to people at all stages; it runs on its own; it's very cost effective; the processes are clearly mapped out on SharePoint.

The BSI audit results for Provance have been staggering: they have a perfectly clean audit record with zero non conformances since inception and certification of the QMS 12 years ago.

This record of excellence was recognized when BSI presented Provance with the BSI Canada 2013 Award of Excellence for single site implementation. The award is presented to the BSI customer, who has demonstrated a culture of excellence and continual improvement in their business. Provance Technologies Inc. is a true example of this culture and a worthy recipient of this prestigious award.



Your business could benefit from ISO 9001, just like Provance Technologies
To find out more, visit www.bsigroup.ca/quality or call 800 862 6752 for details.

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