

»Introducing new software is very complex. You have to take your time and include all important stakeholders and employees. «

The GVL - Gesellschaft zur Verwertung von Leistungsschutzrechten mbH is a trust company and was founded in 1959 by the Deutsche Orchestervereinigung and the Bundesverband der Musikindustrie. The GVL exercises the secondary exploitation rights of ancillary copyrights in the music, film and television sectors for all types of media. More than 140,000 artists and 10,000 phonogram producers have entrusted GVL with their rights management; 150 employees in Dahlem perform these tasks on behalf of GVL. Since 2015, GVL has been managing its projects with the multi-project management software Blue Ant, a solution from the Berlin-based proventis GmbH.

We spoke to Johanna Radloff, Head of Controlling / PMO in the area of administration, about the introduction of the software.



## Case Study

**Ms. Radloff, what position do you hold at GVL and what are your areas of activity?**

I have been with the GVL for three years. About two and a half years ago I started setting up a project management office. Today I am the head of the Controlling and PMO group.

**How should we imagine the project landscape in your company?**

In 2009 there was a change in EU law, which also led to changes in our company. That's why we've been running a major change programme since 2015, which will continue until the end of 2017. Changes include rebuilding our entire IT architecture. We've introduced and developed new systems. We also made an organizational change. This means that we've been running about 60 different projects for the last two

years. We are modernizing and digitalizing the company according to the motto "from an office to an agile IT company". We have a rather classic project landscape with one program manager, one PMO, 10 to 15 internal and external project managers and about 90 internal and external project employees. Our project programme is also rather classic-based, with a weekly steering committee, which discusses project proposals, change requests and final reports

### What led you to Blue Ant?

At that time, we needed a uniform and transparent platform for project planning and control. A further criterion was identifying over-planning and preventing the overburdening of employees. The possibility of having professional and structured coordination of the GVL project portfolio was also important to us. These were the main reasons why we were looking for a project management tool. In concrete terms, we wanted to manage employee availability and resource planning. Other reasons for this were the timing and content planning of the project topics, the management and handling of projects, the project time recording and the evaluations for each project or portfolio.

Blue Ant seemed to be the best solution for our criteria, as it met all the requirements of the time and proved to be very easy to use. We also found it practical that proventis GmbH is based in Berlin. Of course, we also obtained different opinions about project management tools and learned that Blue Ant was one of the favourites of the GEMA (performing rights society). The fact that the Blue Ant multi-project management tool allows working with JIRA interfaces was also a selection criterion. These were all reasons why we considered Blue Ant to be the perfect candidate for our company, especially

as it was good value for money. Even today we're still very happy with this decision.

### What did your company use before?

Before the introduction of Blue Ant we handled all evaluations, planning, documentation and status reports with Excel spreadsheets. In addition to the Excel spreadsheets, we also worked with KIMAI, an open source tool, which we used tool for time recording.



Johanna Radloff, Head of Controlling and PMO at GVL

### Can you name a typical scenario where using Blue Ant helps?

External resource management is very important at GVL. There have been times in the last two years when we have been supported by more than 100 external employees who use the master data management for time recording. This is very important to us for invoicing. We also typically use status reports, because it's very helpful to be able to send status reports from the project to a defined group of people. Centrally, everything is always stored here in the same way. We also make active use of individual project planning. We had a BIRT report built for

project applications. Project management is therefore very practical for the project manager.

### **Which systems are running in the background at GVL and which interfaces were necessary?**

We use the Jira plugin as a direct interface and Jira as a ticket system. Blue Ant also has a ticket system, but since Jira was already established in our company, we continued to use it.

The rough planning, however, is done entirely in Blue Ant. We also use Confluence, a knowledge management tool, and the ERP system as an accounting system. The costs entered there are then imported into Blue Ant. For multi-project planning, we sometimes use MS Project, too.

### **How did the introduction of the software proceed?**

It was a big realisation that we had not involved the works council early enough, as we got a three-month lockdown before we were allowed to perform the installation. So here is a tip: involve the works council as early as possible!

The installation, initial setup and configuration ran without any problems and took about two weeks.

The trainings also took about two weeks to complete. Then we started the rollout - first to a few, then to all projects. That took about six to seven months. Approximately one year passed before the software was accepted by the majority of the employees. At some point in time, all employees noticed how useful Blue Ant is for our company and today, after two years, it is completely normal for everyone to use Blue Ant. So, we were fully operational with reliable data after about a year.

We did have one small problem, though: proventis advised us to initially install the

software on MSSQL. However, we quickly realized that this was not working. So after nine months we pulled the plug and migrated to PostgreSQL. Everything's been going great since then!

The advice and support we got from proventis was a great help. In the beginning we wrote a concept for our company. After consultation, we summarized this concept in a project management manual. Here, all employees are subject to rules that we regularly update. In addition, project managers are always informed about new developments.

This is very important for us and was of great help to us at the beginning. Various guidelines and processes are properly documented. This was really helpful, especially for employees who do not use Blue Ant on a daily basis.

Introducing software is very costly. You have to take your time and include all important stakeholders and employees.

We carried out the introduction of Blue Ant at GVL very thoroughly, trained again and again and made updates. Nevertheless, the process required a lot of time and attention.

### **How much did it cost to introduce Blue Ant?**

Including licenses, consulting and training, we came to an amount of about 45,000 €.

### **How was the cooperation with proventis?**

Very effective from the start! In the selection process, we contacted a wide variety of providers and proventis stood out immediately. The employees seemed to us to be very professional and at the same time they were nice on a more personal level. That won us over immediately.

On this occasion I would also like to praise the support department at proventis, be-

cause we are very active and contact them frequently. We always get very quick and detailed answers. Individual solutions, such as the BIRT report and configurations, are always helpful, too.

The project management training courses were praised by all employees of GVL and have been very helpful in combination with the software. It just worked!

**Thank you for talking to us, Ms. Radloff!**