



Reflections from Taposh Bhattacharya

What was your role in this project?

Last year, I joined the a-connect team as an Independent Professional to lead a team on a large project for a pharma client. The engagement was a success but not without its challenges. Implementing change with a client is inherently complex, especially if the client is multinational. In this particular case, we not only had to temporarily take over and operate the client's supply chain, but we also had to work with their buyer to migrate it to their own organisation and infrastructure. We had to establish working relationships and processes across numerous countries, cultures, functions and legal entities.

What were some lessons learned as a result of this project?

1. Engage with your stakeholders & actively build trust

It is very common for businesses to 'manage by committee'. But you need to make sure that you remain accountable to a single person. So, make sure you agree who your primary client is, and who are your key stakeholders. Once you know them all, you must engage with them proactively on a regular basis. For example, you should engage with the primary client or opinion leaders on at least a weekly basis. This doesn't necessarily need to be formal – often, 'water cooler chats' are very powerful communication channels.

2. Avoid open-ended requests

A vague brief will result in vague outcomes. You may find yourself in a situation where you are criticised for not delivering something that was perhaps not even originally asked for! This is critically important. When you embark on projects or tasks, make sure you absolutely know what the deliverables are and document them accordingly.

3. Make your output tangible

We are consultants, so our 'outputs' are often ephemeral and hard to demonstrate. The only tangible output your client gets should not be just the bill they receive at the end of the month! Always make sure you have written outputs to show for activity. address the crisis directly is my preferred way of handling it!

4. Be prepared to push back

It is OK to push back on requests that don't make sense. It is our job to protect our clients' interests when they are straying down a path that may not be right for them.

5. Consulting engagement vs business outcome

There is a difference between a successful consulting engagement and business outcome. Due to a wide variety of reasons, your client may not necessarily get the business outcome they wanted or expected. This does not directly imply that your consulting engagement was poor. Staying close to your client and supporting them throughout their journey is critical and your client will appreciate that.

How was your experience working with a-connect?

So far, I have greatly enjoyed my journey with a-connect. I had the chance to work with people who are not only experts at their chosen function, but who are also smart and experienced in effectively implementing real change. Obviously, it's always enjoyable when a team succeeds. But what is less obvious is the positive attitude and the notion that we deal with difficulties and challenges together, as a team. If you can build a trusting environment, you will naturally build a strong set of working relationships. If you enjoy the journey as a result, your productivity, quality of output and outcomes will always be better.



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