

BLACK BOARD INC. REINVENTING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



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CXO INSIGHTS

LESSONS OF A BUMPY JOURNEY INTO THE HR-CLOUD

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Successful cloud migrations depend heavily on the way we work.

Over the last 25 years, Deutsche Telekom has transformed from a purely state owned German enterprise to the biggest telecommunication company in Europe. Despite a successful strategy of international growth there have been several challenges. The HR organization was fragmented, with multiple products, tools, processes and was therefore expensive. HR was not able to answer simple questions like “who are our global talents?” or “do we have a shortage of talents?” Considering we were and are in a global war for talents this was disastrous.

In 2014, we were convinced we had found the panacea to all our problems. We decided to implement an HR Service cloud with a global standardized process, which in turn promised to reduce costs and lead to a more successful talent management.

However, after two years of concerted effort, DT was still unexpectedly reporting low HR customer satisfaction with talent management. Furthermore, it still took far too long to pass through the various stages of the talent management process. HR didn't provide the required transparency and worked inefficiently, despite major investments in improvements. On top of that the employees of our company were not interested in using what we created.

While creating a globally unified cloud-based solution was our focus, we understood the digitization of these processes solely as implementing the old process but using a new technology. We subsequently failed because we neglected the most important factor: the people. Unfortunately, we hadn't simultaneously changed the way we think and work and as a result had designed the project and implementation in a waterfall approach. Instead of focusing on the customer it was driven by our own outdated experience and concept of working. And since we were not using the advantages and standards of a cloud solution we just projected the old HR world on to a new application.

Having recognized our key error, we started a radical change in 2016 and set up a completely redesigned pragmatic product lifecycle

process (PLP) for HR products. This process puts the customer in the spotlight and is based on agile collaboration methods between all parties involved. Design thinking, SCRUM and the Continuous Improvement Process became an integral part of HR product management in order to facilitate collaboration in an agile way. HR product managers were trained to expand their capabilities regarding IT knowledge and customer centricity especially in the context of product development and changes. Product Managers were also put in charge of keeping all relevant stakeholders engaged during an agile implementation. It proved to be a key success factor during launches as well as in retirement of different products and helped overcome major customer acceptance issues associated with agile work methods. At the same time the focus concerning capabilities of IT project specialists within HR had to be switched away from programming and IT operations towards consulting and IT management.

As a result, customer satisfaction has significantly improved and also, the motivation of DT's employees to work with the now customer centric solution.

And we learned our lessons: cloud offers multiple opportunities. However to fully exploit the benefits we have to work in parallel on changing technology, using customer centric processes and working in a much more agile way. CA



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