

“We need passion in project management”

Efficient project execution in pharmaceutical engineering

Engineering, design and construction contractors will only meet the needs of today's pharmaceutical market with the help of sophisticated project management. Rolf Mönig, Managing Director of Chemengineering Technology GmbH in Wiesbaden and Head of the Engineering Unit at the Chemengineering Group, has no doubt that this is the case. In an exclusive PROCESS interview, he outlined the ideal project execution profile.

? *Mr. Mönig, Chemengineering changed strategic direction back in 2007. How much success have you had over the past two years?*

Mönig: We have reorganized the business into two strategic operating units, namely engineering and consulting. Engineering is clearly the larger of the two with around 200 employees. The objective of the strategic realignment was and still is to achieve controlled growth and enhance service delivery transparency. Our Technology Designers have an excellent knowledge of investment projects including pharmaceutical plant/production line design and qualification/validation. The Business Designers on the other hand focus on strategic, process and compliance consulting which is not directly linked to capital investment projects. We are definitely heading in the right direction, but we still have some way to go.

? *Your goal is to enhance the efficiency of project execution. Why is that important?*

Mönig: Every customer who launches

a capital investment project expects to get a return on investment as quickly as possible. We have seen many instances where decisions to invest in pharmaceutical production assets are delayed, but the timetable for market introduction of the product and production startup remains unchanged. As a result, the time available for the project can easily be reduced by three to five months, which means that you are essentially involved in a fast-track project.

? *How can you make up for the time lost?*

Mönig: One solution is highly focused supplier management/expediting. The engineering team regularly checks to ensure that the right version of the equipment is ready for shipment on time at the expected quality level and that the items pass FAT (factory acceptance test). If we do not find out that the welds are out of spec until we start to install the equipment in the cleanroom, then we have a problem. The engineering team has to work proactively to ensure that these situations do not occur. The way to save time is to take sufficient time to get everything in place right at the start of a project, so that you are able to keep in control during the subsequent project phases.

? *Fast-track projects are generally very challenging for the engineering team. What approach has proven to be the most effective?*

Mönig: Everyone who is involved in the project needs to get the communication process started early. It is a good idea to have the engineering team involved at the investment phase. We have found programming workshops to be very effective. Everyone who will be contributing to the project (ar-

chitects, engineers, the facility manager and the production management team) spends at least two days together to get acquainted and write down the project requirements. This document, which is signed by everyone, forms the basis for the subsequent project phases. I have had very good experience with this approach, especially on high-tech projects.

? *In other words, you are a firm supporter of a clearly defined project structure.*

Mönig: A project organization with well defined responsibilities and authority keeps the project on track. Nomination of a central contact person and excellent internal and external (customer) reporting are very important. Both sides benefit from the measures: Chemengineering, as planner, because the projects run more smoothly and cost less, and the customer because he always knows how the project is progressing at any point in time. That's why we run advanced training courses to ensure that our project management team has the right skills.

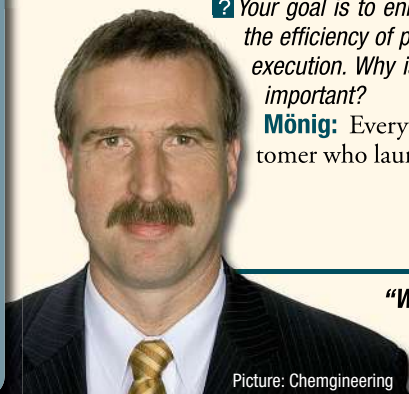
? *This means that your engineers need to be very proficient at soft skills such as effective communications and teamwork.*

Mönig: That is correct. When we recruit staff, we pay attention to engineering expertise as well as social skills. Our employees are always integrated into the customer team and have to work with a lot of different people to make sure that the project runs smoothly. There must be mutual understanding and respect in the project team to ensure that everyone is emotionally involved. We only get the best possible results if each individual personally identifies with the given task. We simply need more passion.

Mr. Mönig, thank you for taking the time to talk with us.

“When we recruit staff, we pay special attention to engineering expertise as well as social skills.”

Rolf Mönig, Engineering Manager



Picture: Chemengineering

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