

## Section Heading

# Building Resources for a Corporate Performance Management (CPM) Project

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**W**hen CEO TODAY asked me to advise its readers on how to build a successful CPM project, I immediately knew that addressing the skill shortage in the CPM market would have to be at the top of their agenda. In this article I give a practical overview of how to tackle this issue and make sure that your organisation grabs the best CPM expertise before your competitors do.

## The CPM landscape

Corporate Performance Management (CPM) or Business Performance Management (BPM) is an umbrella term that has been used to describe the collective processes and systems that are used to organise and measure the performance of an organisation.

Traditionally, CPM Projects have been focussed on core finance activities such as consolidation and reporting; budgeting and planning; and analytics (KPI dashboards, score carding and business intelligence), but it is continuing to evolve and be more sophisticated, for instance in response to financial regulatory issues and other compliance issues, such as environmental reporting.

When implemented correctly, a unified and coherent CPM system can help an organisation gain competitive advantage and help the delivery of a new corporate strategy.

We have many clients that use CPM systems to drive strategy rather than the other way around. One key client - a major US retailer - used CPM to set the stage for European expansion by first building powerful new reporting systems which helped to define the key issues and trends before beginning the initiative.

CPM has continued to evolve and grow over the last five years but all the

signs indicate that we are now entering a new and exciting stage in its evolution.

A new generation of CPM software is now firmly established and increasingly our clients are expressing the need to build an analytical layer on top of their core ERP data systems. Most enterprises have now built the platform to extract and hold the data but now want systems that will allow them to create a clear picture of what is being shown.

## A Shortage of CPM Skills

Whilst still most often owned by Group Finance, a successful CPM implementation has to be drawn from all areas of the business, notably IT, Operations and Finance.

This had a major impact on resourcing as companies are forced to search for niche skills and build a CPM project group consisting of multi-disciplined business analysts, software experts, trainers and project managers - all of whom are in very short supply and in constant demand.

Additionally, there has been considerable consolidation in the CPM market as the world's biggest software companies have built competence in this growth market with the acquisition of many smaller specialist CPM software vendors.

This has culminated with three of the biggest software companies - Oracle, SAP and IBM - all carrying a significant product suite dedicated to the CPM market.

Clearly these industry leaders see a big future in the CPM market, but what impact has consolidation had on resourcing? Many of our clients have expressed a hesitation to begin new CPM projects until the roadmap for their existing or future planned CPM software becomes clear. As a result of this reduction in new CPM projects

there has been fewer professionals exposed to the concepts and software and therefore fewer available in the labour market.

As Oracle, SAP and IBM begin to establish a stable roadmap for their unified suite of CPM software products we may see an increased level of client investment into new CPM projects which will increase the "churn" of CPM skills onto the open market.

## Resourcing a CPM Project

What steps can senior executives take to address the skills shortage in the CPM market?

- Use Independent CPM Experts

There is an excellent network of senior professionals available across Europe with a proven background in the planning and implementation of CPM projects. Purchasing expertise at the earliest possible stage will ensure a more trouble-free project.

Senior independent CPM experts, without affiliation and vested interest to a professional services company, can be more effective when building an independent helicopter view of your business and thus be particularly effective at the requirements gathering stage of a project and in the management of stakeholders. Also, on the cost side, the daily fee rate can often be up to 50 per cent lower for experienced consultants than when using large implementation partners.

- Benchmark World-class CPM practice

If you want to use CPM as a competitive advantage, you need to know what others are doing, how they are doing it and how they arrived at their current position.

We have an excellent network of contacts across Europe from a range of industries that have implemented successful CPM programmes. It is a network that we have been able to share with key contacts and it can bring interested parties together to discuss the best practice on an independent level. This is particularly useful when scoping a CPM project and before asking software vendors for demonstrations.

- “Real life” experience

Today’s CEO must understand that implementing a CPM solution will involve much more than simply buying software. A successful implementation will require a combination of change management, education, software, design and implementation skills to meet the business need.

There is no substitute for real life experience and outside experts can draw on their experience of previous implementations and draw together all the essential parts from the business to ensure a smooth CPM programme.

- Knowledge Transfer

One of the most important questions for a CEO is: how will a new CPM system be run when the outside experts have left the building? It is essential that you use the expertise and knowledge from independent CPM professionals to help build a solid future for your CPM teams and systems.

Your CPM project team will be built from a combination of outside experts and internal analysts with relevant business knowledge. Knowledge transfer into your permanent group is vital to ensure the efficient future running of your CPM systems when you reach a business as usual stage. Knowledge transfer can also be an attractive reward to existing and new permanent staff who can gain valuable new CPM skills and project experience.

- Flexible Approach

Whether you are handpicking internal resources to resource your project or looking outside the business to hire permanent or interim CPM skills, it is essential to take a flexible approach. The first step is to understand your business problem and establish a project resourcing plan that is based on the core business issues and processes that are driving the CPM strategy. Software skills are transferable and can be easily trained so we encourage clients to always aim for the business transformation skills first and cross train if necessary into specific software.

- International stage

Most organisations now operate on an international stage and any CPM strategy will drive business issues across borders. You will therefore require an understanding of local business issues, regulation and culture to implement effective change management programmes at a local level. Consider looking further afield for CPM skills and draw from the international community when resourcing a project. We recently staffed an entire global CPM project based in Amsterdam with a team from UK, Netherlands, Asia and South America.

- Plan well in advance

We have already discussed the Europe-wide shortage of CPM skills and as a result excellent independent CPM professionals hold a book of work well in advance. So, prepare and brief your agency as far in advance as possible to ensure the best chance of securing the right consultant for your project.

### Conclusion

With CPM rising in prominence, CEOs of big and small companies need to realise that a success of any CPM project rests hugely on finding the right skills for

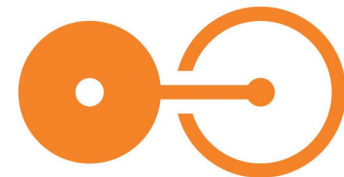
the job. Not only would this ensure a seamless implementation of the project but also help an organisation gain competitive advantage. Now, what CEO can afford to ignore that? ■

### Biography

**James Porter is a Director at eu-solutions, a specialist recruitment partner dedicated to the CPM sector. He has over eight years of experience in the industry and has delivered CPM resource to a wide range of projects across Europe.**

### About eu-solutions

**eu-solutions is a niche recruitment partner in the CPM sector and has expert knowledge of this specialist market - we are the only pan European recruitment company that can find and deliver CPM resources. eu-solutions currently works with world class International corporations, CPM software vendors and top tier professional services companies in the delivery of CPM experts.**



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**For more information on how eu-solutions can help you with resourcing a CPM project please contact is in the UK on 020 7801 6340 or Netherlands +31 (0)20 427 2976. info@eu-solutions.com, www.eu-solutions.com**