



International Insurance Company

Customer Name on request

Employees More than 1.000

Branch Financial Service

Sales More than 50 Mio. EUR *

Phase Established market player

* (in previous year of the project end)

PROCESS OPTIMISATION
PROJECT MANAGEMENT
MANAGEMENT CONSULTATION
INTERIM MANAGEMENT

Head of Credit Control Hamburg - Resolve Backlog in Processing Technical Insurance Data in connection with Closure of German Entity

THE CUSTOMER AND HIS BUSINESS

The customer is a leading global specialty (re)insurer with more than 2.400 employees operating in 26 different locations worldwide. The company offers innovative insurance coverage for industrial and business clients with a high focus on customer service and a profound expertise based on 300 years of company history. The customer's main contact person for this project was based in The Netherlands while the Credit Control project team under the leadership of NSMC was based in Hamburg; the common project language was English.

INITIAL SITUATION

In the first half of 2018 the customer decided to close the German branch of his business which was in operation since 2014 (>50 people, sales approx. 25 Mio. EUR). At the time there was a material backlog in processing of technical insurance data (premiums/claims) which needed to be reviewed, adjusted and matched with settled cash. The necessary processes had yet not been established and the fact that the closure of the entity was already ongoing entailed a lack of own personnel that could be assigned to this task. Therefore, the customer decided in August 2018 to assign NSMC as part-time interim manager and to recruit later on a local project team that was led by NSMC to follow up all the outstanding activities relating to processing data in the customer's primary source system, settle amounts with brokers and match cash positions with the adjusted technical transactions (premiums/claims).

PROJECT TARGET

Target of the project was to clear the backlog that had accumulated in the years 2014-2018. To realise this, a database was set up by NSMC to create a basis for the handling of the large number of single cases, to manage the progress and to establish a reporting system to keep the finance manager and the project steering committee on the customer's side regularly (bi-weekly) updated.



„For me it was very helpful that I could trust that Nicole would manage all aspects of the process - even areas that were not necessarily part of the scope of Nicole's assignment. Nicole recognised that this was in the benefit of the project goal and made sure it was followed up or escalated. She is very hands-on and proactive. We had (bi) weekly update calls but apart from that the daily operation was fully managed by her and therefore taken out of my hands.“

Fatima Benmbarek (Finance Manager)



PROCEDURE

The project started 08/2018 with a Kick-Off Meeting in Hamburg with customer representatives from the foreign parent company and the German entity. During this meeting general information on the company and some project background information were shared and the most relevant EDP-systems were shortly introduced, especially Unit4 CODA for processing the bookkeeping and SUBSCRIBE for the administration and invoicing of the insurance policies.

Based on this NSMC started with a detailed analysis of the Status Quo. Since the backlog had not been addressed in the German entity before, it was not possible to revert to existing processes or internal expertise. NSMC started from close to scratch and defined communication and working processes as well as project priorities and discussed and agreed on those with the customer's different departments in the foreign parent company and in the German entity. In view of the massive number of open items and to ensure a reliable reporting towards the customer's finance manager and project steering committee, a customized MS ACCESS database was developed by NSMC at the same time. This database was the central project steering and reporting tool for all project team members during the whole project lifetime and was continuously adapted to new requirements if necessary.

Within two weeks priorities had been clarified, initial processes implemented and the project steering and reporting tool was ready to go. First focusing on the customer's Top 10-brokers accounting statements from different sources were compiled, pre-checked and, provided with detailed notes on clarification or bookkeeping requirements, forwarded to the Underwriting department of the German entity (responsible for booking the premiums).

CUSTOMER BENEFITS

NSMC was willing and able to take over responsibility for a complex and demanding project involving different customer entities in different countries, to provide the customer with a project customized working tool, and to integrate and lead an intercultural project team as well as other external and internal project members, constantly motivating them to always focus despite all obstacles on the overall project target of allocating, booking and matching more than 5.000 open cases, some of which were very complex in themselves.

Outstanding responses were tracked and finally transactions closed by matching amounts and settlements. Soon after the project start it became clear that the project was far more complex as initially expected with regards to both the volume of transactions as well as the general frame conditions. IT problems had to be solved, missing documents to be requested from brokers, brokers delegated risks to other brokers leading to complex premium statements or premium payments were mixed up with claims payments. Furthermore, the transaction volume was continuously fed by new accounting statements and cash flows as the business as such was ongoing.



„Nicole thinks about how to get to the goal before starting. This helps to think of different elements of the process and work simultaneously on different sub parts that are needed to achieve our goals!“

Fatima Benmbarek (Finance Manager)

At the same time further personnel left the German entity whereas the Credit Control team grew by up to five members at the height. The Underwriting department in Germany was replaced by an additional external service provider who assigned up to six people to this task and later on the foreign parent company established a new department at their headquarters which also supported this project. One of the main challenges was to integrate all these different project members, to ensure that all of them were working towards the same goal and to keep the spirit up besides all obstacles along the way. Due to the final closure of the German entity the project office moved several times. When the Corona Pandemic broke out the whole project team was transferred into homeoffice, making it once again necessary to adapt all communication and working processes.

In April 2021 the project target was finally reached and the project could successfully be closed.