

IPRO 306: Technology and Business Innovations to Improve Operations

Objective

The purpose of IPRO 306 was to increase the efficiency of the operations at the Sloan Valve Company headquarters in Franklin Park, IL. Focusing on areas within the supply chain, two projects were conducted simultaneously. The first project focused on optimizing the supplier data, doing extensive data cleansing and process enhancement. The second project involved optimizing the layout of the warehouse, along with preparing Sloan for a Warehouse Management (WM) implementation within its Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, SAP.

Basic Organization

Overall, nine students were involved in the IPRO 306. These students were divided into two sub-groups in order to handle the project: five students were assigned to the “Supplier Data” team, and four students comprised the “Warehouse Management” team. Each group had a project lead within Sloan Valve and it was decided that each team would be able to best fulfill the project requirements by collaborating closely with Sloan. Each team met on site at Sloan at least once per week for roughly 6-7 hours. In addition, status meetings were held on campus to keep all team members involved in all aspects of the project.

Critical barriers and obstacles

Due to managing multiple projects, there were numerous of deliverables that had to be managed and there were several concerns that the group would not be able to deliver on every expectation. In the end, the Supplier Data groups put in extra time at Sloan to accomplish all tasks on time, whereas the Warehouse Management team worked with Sloan to narrow the scope of the project. It was decided that a full replication of the Warehouse in WM was not feasible in the time frame allotted.

Conclusion

IPRO 306 was a unique learning opportunity for everyone involved. The team was able to tackle some very common, yet complex business issues in a professional setting. And with over 400+ man hours on site at Sloan, IPRO 306 delivered tangible results and delivered all of the key requirements of Sloan. The IPRO 306 work will deliver both immediate and long term results for Sloan. In addition, the team was able to gain practical knowledge by working closely with a leading ERP system, SAP.

Next steps

The WM implementation needs to maintain its momentum so that it can be further configured, tested, and ultimately implemented into Sloan. The increases in efficiencies and service levels that an effective WM solution would bring should be substantial.

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