

Award-Winning Quality

by Michael Hitzek

Highly successful implementations don't just happen – they are the result of meticulous preparation, strong project management and effective collaboration between key stakeholders. Ernie Gunst, president of CSO EMEA and corporate officer of SAP AG, accredits quality management with a key role in this process. At the SAP Quality Awards 2008, part of SAPPHIRE® 2008 in Berlin, SAP recognized what Gunst described as the “absolutely outstanding” quality management of four companies in their SAP software implementation projects.

The awards were presented to the French company Bouygues Construction, the Standard Bank of South Africa, the French utilities company EDF (Électricité de France SA), and the English construction and property company Davis Langdon.

SAP has developed a set of 10 quality principles and defined eight key areas that are critical to successfully implementing a software solution. To qualify for an award, competitors had to show how they had implemented and realized the quality principles. The jury wanted to see specific quality activities in areas such as IT strategy, project management, support readiness, change management. Process descriptions, quality standards and measures and evidence thereof, were expected from all participating companies.

Over the course of its implementation project, EDF monitored and regularly documented feedback from the business. In its official award statement, the jury praised this approach for not only enabling the energy company to respond quickly to new situations, but also predict project changes at an early stage. Similarly, Bouygues Construction regularly collected feedback, involving stakeholders in the project from the very start.

The Standard Bank of South Africa impressed the jury with its implementation “of a still relatively new product – the core banking area of SAP for Banking – under challenging circumstances.” Two key factors were acknowledged as critical to the success of this project: the development of a quality framework and a strong project sponsorship, which enabled decisions to be made quickly. At Davis Langdon, quality reviews and measures were driven by a dedicated Quality Director with previous experience of SAP implementations.

The jury gave special recognition to the Spanish section of the international humanitarian organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). It was praised for its “successful implementation under very difficult circumstances.” The team worked with a prototype and introduced iterative control cycles and feedback loops to implement an international financial solution. This SAP business solution now provides precise and up-to-date reports from some of the most dangerous and technologically disadvantaged areas in the world.

This was the third time the Quality Awards had been held by SAP. Svan Lembke, Vice President of the quality program in the SAP EMEA region and host of the awards ceremony, said that the level of quality had increased enormously since the awards had been first introduced. This year, 100 companies took part, 14 of which made it to the finals. “Ultimately, they are all winners,” said Lembke, referring to the high standards of quality management shown by all competitors.

The jury for the SAP Quality Awards 2008 consisted of SAP representatives and industry experts from IBM, Cap Gemini, Accenture, Atos, ComputerWorld, Synthec, IDS, the British Quality Foundation, Deloitte, and ITelligence, in addition to last year's winners ESBie and National Air Traffic Services (NATS). Although only four companies won the award, all finalists were recognized for their outstanding achievements and focus on

quality: Philip Morris International (Switzerland), Eurovia, Gaz de France (France), Birmingham City Council, Oxford University Press, Ecotricity, United Utilities (United Kingdom), and Evonik and ADVA from Germany.

All finalists had the quality methods in place to be confident about their success, even before they went live. "Events like the Quality Awards are needed to deepen our knowledge and enable us to share these learnings with everyone," stresses Svan Lembke. "This gives confidence to customers that they can achieve the extraordinary with SAP solutions."

http://www.sapqualityawards.com/pdf/QA_Principles_Flyer_single.pdf