

LAND & JOINT SYSTEMS

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Dr Vincent Considine - Type 45 Fully Integrated Communications System Programme (FICS)

Thales Communications UK are charged through the Type 45 Destroyer FICS Programme with the provision of an integrated communications network within the ship, providing a full suite of both internal and external communications. The original contract for the first 3 ships was awarded in 2001 with the follow on Batch 2 contract awarded in Apr 2006. The Programme is characterised by being highly complex, high value and of long duration.

With the award of the Batch 2 contract, and in line with stated MoD policy, it was mandated that the Batch 2 Programme should be run using an Earned Value Management System (EVMS). Adoption of this system represented a step change to the established working practices within the Programme

After an initial period, a Readiness Review (RR) of the Batch 2 T45 FICS development and delivery programme revealed that there were substantial shortfalls in the Earned Value Management System and the Performance Measurement Baseline (PMB) and as a result a major shift in emphasis was required to deliver the PMB. In addition the existing Programme Manager was transferred to other duties, with the Deputy Programme Manager appointed to the PM role.

The dilemma then faced by the team was the requirement to establish a PMB as well as continuing to deliver the Programme. At this juncture Dr Vincent Considine of Vee Solutions was engaged to support the team in this task.

Vincents brief was to support the new Programme Manager, recently promoted to the role and charged with complete responsibility for delivering the programme. The support required from Vee Solutions was to focus on the EVM system and its associated processes as well as delivering the PMB itself, thereby complementing the PM whilst allowing him to focus on continued Programme delivery. This came at a time when the programme team were clearly distressed by the situation and required sensitive support during this difficult re-planning exercise.


Upon engagement, Vincent deployed within a week to join the team in a coaching and mentoring role. While the Programme Manager continued to focus on the delivery of the programme itself, Vincent facilitated the development of the Earned Value Management System (EVMS) and the PMB. He worked very closely with the corporate staff who were developing new processes in parallel, to ensure that the new processes met the needs of the T45 programme. He facilitated a pre-planned, very high profile, workshop which validated the Contract Statement of Work (SoW); the WBS, the Organisation Breakdown Structure (OBS) and the Responsibility Assignment Matrix (RAM); defining all Work Packages (WPs) including their inputs, outputs and dependencies; developing the network and schedule to CA and WP level, including full resourcing; identifying and analysing WP risks including their probability and impact. The workshop was so successful in engaging the Control Account Managers (CAMs) and the project team that it was cited as best practice and subsequently used as an example for other programmes to emulate.



Vincent quickly built bridges with the programme team that enabled a clear picture of how the necessary processes could be developed and stimulated their generation. In addition to supporting the T45 FICS programme he transferred good practice into the corporate knowledge base. The Performance Measurement Baseline (PMB) was developed successfully and on time and a very highly successful presentation of the PMB was made. The presentation demonstrated the high confidence of the programme team and the CAMs to the directors of the company and resulted in a sea change in how the project was perceived. The PMB ultimately delivered was judged to be of such a high quality that the conventional next step of conducting a full scale IBR was judged unnecessary and the team was encouraged to move directly to a demonstration review.

After the successful outcome of the declaration of PMB, the team were faced with another challenge in the form of the Batch 2 Critical Design Review. Due to the unavailability of the Technical Director and other candidates to Chair the CDR Review Panel, Vincent was identified as a highly suitable candidate to Chair the event, given his strong technical background and previous involvement with the T45 Team. Vincent was able to bring an element of impartiality to the event and facilitate proceedings to the Customers satisfaction. The CDR was deemed successful and allowed the Programme to proceed to the Production and Delivery phases.

Throughout his involvement with the T45 FICS Team, Vincent was a valuable contributor to all of the activities with which he became involved and was held in high regard by both the Programme team and Senior Management hierarchy. He undoubtedly contributed greatly to the success of both the PMB and CDR activities, and has left the Programme well positioned to move forward with the continuing execution of the project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Preece', written in a cursive style.

David Preece
Programme Manager T45 FICS

February 2007.