



CASE STUDY

Skillful Management Streamlines Agribusiness Product Development

PROJECT BACKGROUND

An agribusiness giant with a rich R&D pipeline was in a fiercely competitive race to be among the first to launch drought-tolerant seeds. The company was using both a traditional native-trait process and a genetically modified trait method, each with separate discovery platforms and staffs.

The company realized that the technologies, used together, had the potential to create a better new seed quicker. Accordingly, the two approaches were combined under a single development program that required significant collaboration between groups with very different procedural and cultural norms.

Despite the program combination, the development timeline had to remain firm: if the company's new seeds missed a field-trial planting deadline, development could be delayed as long as a year while waiting for the next planting season.

Recognizing that a robust project management approach was needed to ensure success, the firm engaged Integrated

Project Management Company, Inc. (IPM) to integrate the drought-tolerant program as quickly as possible.

IPM'S SOLUTION

IPM determined that the best way to bring the two projects together under one umbrella was to create detailed process maps. This would capture workflows for the groups' different approaches and document interactions between functional areas to identify where and when there was a transfer of material or data. The exercise could also reveal opportunities for synergies that would enable future compression of the overall schedule.

IPM conducted extensive interviews with key stakeholders and visited research sites, genetic engineering labs, and field locations to understand their processes and clarify development steps. The resulting Integrated Project Plan enabled the formerly separate teams to work together to identify redundancies, as well as parallel processes that could help speed development. The mapping process illuminated the need to plan earlier for key development steps that had

previously not been done, such as launch preparations and ex-US regulatory filings.

Process mapping supplied the team the framework they needed to create a robust program plan that adhered to the company's original timeline.

IPM developed a risk management plan and risk assessment tool to evaluate, document, and facilitate contingency planning by the team. This was particularly important for management of the company's worldwide field trial planting schedules and multi-country regulatory filings. A detailed communications plan was also developed, enabling the many stakeholders, including the Program Leader, to remain up to date at all times. Guidelines were created for an internal Website to serve as an easily accessible program document library to improve cross-functional team communications and build team synergies.

PROJECT RESULTS

IPM's project management approach enabled the company to successfully combine its drought-tolerant efforts into a single, well-orchestrated

program to speed its progress toward commercialization.

By providing greater process visibility to highlight bottlenecks, IPM's objective, facilitation-based approach provided information for faster decision making and greater program control. The new approaches to risk planning and team communication created opportunities for accelerating progress. Lessons learned were applied by project team members in their own functional areas, and advice was provided to program management on ways to expand the project management discipline to more broadly benefit other company programs.



200 South Frontage Road, Suite 220
Burr Ridge, IL 60527
T 630.789.8600
F 630.789.7945
www.ipmcinc.com