Cigref
Syntec informatique
charter

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Syntec informatique charter

Foreword

On 24 February 2003 Cigref and Syntec informatique signed a charter which committed both professional associations to respect 10 fundamental orientations in order to promote the optimal use of technology and information systems as a vector for creating value for companies.
The 10 points of the charter are as follows:

- Business knowledge
- Transparency
- Impartiality
- Independence of opinion and expression
- Quality
- Innovation
- Circulation of information
- Knowledge-sharing
- Productivity
- Follow-up of the charter

The present document - published in March 2004 - recapitulates a set of recommendations related to these orientations which are applicable to all the services carried out between a client (member of Cigref) and a service provider (member of Syntec informatique). The elaboration of this document was entrusted to a joint commission made up of the lifeblood of the two associations.

The Charter is the concrete expression of the expertise of Cigref and Syntec informatique and their shared desire to promote better use of information technologies to create value for the enterprise and serve as a vector for increasing the trust of investors.

The two associations have undertaken to promote amongst their members ten fundamental orientations with regard to the mastery of technologies, business and projects.

Contents

The aim of the Charter is to define for each IT business (Consulting, Outsourcing and TAM, Engineering and Integration, Software) a code of actions to be undertaken in order to ensure that the services are carried out correctly and that both the users and the providers are satisfied.

Outsourcing and third-party application maintenance (TAM)

Contents

1. General framework

1.1. General context / Definition

We talk about outsourcing when a company subcontracts the management of part or all of its information system to a service provider

The term *outsourcing* is used generically when a company subcontracts part of its activity to a third party, generally outside its core business. Outsourcing can therefore concern a company's different functions (HR management, purchasing, logistics and, notably, the management of the information system). Within IT service companies, the term *outsourcing* is frequently used to indicate the outsourcing of information systems.

The main areas covered by IT outsourcing are as follows:

- third-party application maintenance (or application outsourcing),
- production outsourcing,
- hardware (or automation) outsourcing,
- outsourcing of distributed architecture (telephony, networks, peripheral means),
- hosting,
- help desk,
- global outsourcing: we talk about global outsourcing when the outsourcing – for all or part of the information system – concerns all of the previously mentioned areas,
- business process outsourcing (BPO), business transformation outsourcing (BTO).

Outsourcing professions came into being around twenty years ago in different forms according to the country and culture (strong development of TAM in France, global outsourcing approach in Anglo-Saxon countries).

They have adapted according to the major developments in information systems and today meet a marked need for industrialisation and rationalisation within a large number of companies.

1.2. Characteristics of outsourcing

Outsourcing is characterised by:

- a mutual long-term commitment between an IT service provider and an end user,
- a multiparty relationship because, on the client side, many representatives are involved, beyond the IT department itself (general management, finance and administration, business units....),
- a detailed contractual framework which defines an expected level of service (as opposed to a deliverable to be produced in a system integration contract),
- services which concern an existing operational information system,
- a scope which is likely to change constantly in order to meet the client's issues and needs,
- the terms of reversibility back to the client and transferability towards another service provider,
- in certain cases, the taking on of staff or assets,
- in certain cases, the use of remote platforms or teams (idea of offshoring / nearshoring),
- in certain cases, the hosting of platforms.

An outsourcing project and its contract therefore require a very strong collaboration between the service provider and the client not only in the preparation and implementation but also on a day-to-day basis in order to ensure that the information system functions properly.

Remark: in certain cases we talk about "end-of-life" outsourcing when the information system concerned by the service is scheduled to be withdrawn or replaced by a new system under construction.

For these contracts, the characteristics may be very different (shorter-term commitment, scope which changes little except to decrease in size, no need for reversibility / transferability conditions ...)

1.3. Terminology / Glossary

As things stand, there is no definitive reference system common to the different players in the outsourcing market.

We propose below certain definitions which correspond to what is most commonly used.

1.3.1. Outsourcing

This basically means that a company entrusts part of its activity to a service provider. For example: accounting, production, personnel management. The idea has been applied by extension to IT.

Outsourcing has supporters and critics. Its supporters say that by freeing itself from problems which are peripheral to its core activity the company is able to concentrate on its business and therefore better manage its future. Its critics say that the company loses a part of its expertise and becomes dependent on external service providers.

Considering the long-term nature and the importance of the commitments, outsourcing contracts must be drawn up meticulously, especially with regard to the quality of service supplied by the service provider and the client / provider roles and responsibilities.

Within an IT context outsourcing involves partial or total responsibility for an information system, its development and its maintenance. A company can even go so far as to entrust all the management of its IT resources to a third party: this is known as *facilities management*.

1.3.2. Facilities management

Outsourcing to a third party – with or without relocation – of all or part of a company's IT resources and its information system within the framework of a long-term relationship and with a set of service agreements.

The functions must concern a consistent subset of users.

The commitment is made within a long-term, renewable framework. It is generally a fixed-price commitment, with a clear definition of the expected level of service.

This outsourcing is carried out by a service provider which works in close collaboration with the client.

1.3.3. Global outsourcing

Global outsourcing represents a complete outsourcing element (the taking over of all of an information system), with management of both hardware infrastructures and applications (either specific or software packages / ERP) made up of a heterogeneous set of application channels: payroll, business applications such as banking (electronic banking, cheques, securities), customer relationship management, administrative back-offices. Included in this segment are long-term ASP (Application Service Provider) solutions dedicated to one application (e.g. sales-force automation ASP). This type of outsourcing may be very similar to BPO (business process outsourcing), with boundaries which are sometimes unclear. BPO has a broader reach than outsourcing, since it includes not only IT but also the other segments of the outsourced function.

This management may concern both the client's IT personnel and its hardware assets (workstations, servers, PABX, software packages, etc.).

1.3.4. Selective outsourcing

Selective outsourcing covers only a part of global outsourcing, in which case it may concern, for example:

- hardware outsourcing,
- production outsourcing,
- third-party application maintenance (TAM),
- etc.

1.3.5. Hardware outsourcing

Hardware outsourcing covers all or part of the functions which need to be maintained in order to manage and upgrade user workstations and the associated support services:

- help desk,
- local team,
- hardware and software management and supply,
- repairs and maintenance,
- management of workstations,
- distribution.

More often than not the hardware which is managed now includes laptops, PDAs and mobile phones.

1.3.6. Production outsourcing

Production outsourcing covers all or part of the hardware and software platform which allows the information system to be operational. What is usually referred to are:

- mail servers,
- intermediate servers (e.g. printing),
- critical application servers,
- telephony networks and structures,
- and the application systems running on this hardware.

... whether it be in large-system architecture or in distributed architecture.

1.3.7. TAM (third-party application maintenance)

Management by the service provider of the maintenance and the evolution of all or part of the application system. TAM does not cover the operation of the application system, which is carried out within the framework of production maintenance. TAM of the application channels aims to do the same thing as hardware maintenance, i.e. avoid malfunctions, and, if they should arise, restore the system as quickly as possible; it also takes into account the inevitable evolutions linked to the life cycles of the systems and operating systems as well as those linked to new functional needs.

TAM is broken down into 3 main areas: application assistance, curative maintenance and upgrade maintenance.

- application assistance allows both application managers and the client's operating teams to have functional and technical support,
- curative maintenance is maintenance aimed at ensuring the smooth running of production applications,
- upgrade maintenance: this includes all the services which allow the addition and modification of system functionalities, as well as regulatory upgrades. It includes adaptive maintenance, which allows one to take into account the upgrades linked to changes in the versions of the operating systems on the systems which host the application(s).

1.3.8. Service agreement

A document which specifies the levels of service to be provided and the scope involved. It details the responsibilities of both the service provider and the client.

This document identifies the provision and level of quality required in objective and quantifiable terms. It is a formal agreement, a document which binds both the client and the service provider. It must allow a flexible definition of the services to be provided in order to be adaptable to the inevitable changes in needs and in the scope covered. It must be a service management tool.

The Service Agreement also allows the annual recurrent cost of the service to be fixed.

1.3.9. Help Desk

A service which consists in assisting the in-house users of the IT services at their disposal, in terms of both hardware and software.

This user support service must be easily accessible, must provide solutions to the majority of problems and requests explained and must act as an orientation platform for more complex problems. A help desk is judged according to quality criteria, which are usually as follows:

- the rate and time of problem resolution,
- the rate of online resolution,
- the average response-time, the rate of abandoned calls,
- the rate of remote solutions,
- the quality of the reception and the service provided to the user.

1.3.10. Responsibility

This is the first phase of the service. It establishes the foundations of the service production. It includes the composition of the operational teams and the tasks to be carried out in order to minimise the risk involved in the management of the realisation of the service. This

phase can vary enormously, depending on the services to be provided, the time available, the attitude and requests of the client. Many of the tasks are carried out simultaneously.

1.3.11. Recurrence or service production phase

This is the second phase of the service. It consists in:

- providing the client with a service in conformity with the terms of the contract,
- managing the provision of the service according to the agreed financial conditions,
- proposing optimisations to the client.

1.3.12. Reversibility / Transferability

This is the last phase of the service. It can be as complex as the responsibility phase; it is also a project. It ends the provision of the service, at the client's request, either when the client re-assumes responsibility for the provision of the service (reversibility) or when the service is entrusted to a third party (transferability).

In an outsourcing contract the reversibility / transferability clause defines the conditions (including financial conditions) according to which the service provider will, at the end of the service, hand back to the client the control of the scope outsourced.

This phase is often much more complicated from a legal point of view than from an operational point of view due to the transfers of responsibility it implies.

1.3.13. Offshoring

We talk about *offshoring* when companies turn to resources based abroad, in countries where labour costs are low. Offshoring is considered to be a way of reducing service costs, and it pre-supposes the acceptance and mastery of a certain number of constraints inherent in this type of operation (distance, cultural differences, differences in time-zones, language issues, legal constraints, more complex organisation with both back-office and front-office...).

The term *nearshoring* is starting to be used more and more frequently to describe a service carried out in a nearby location (province, neighbouring country...).

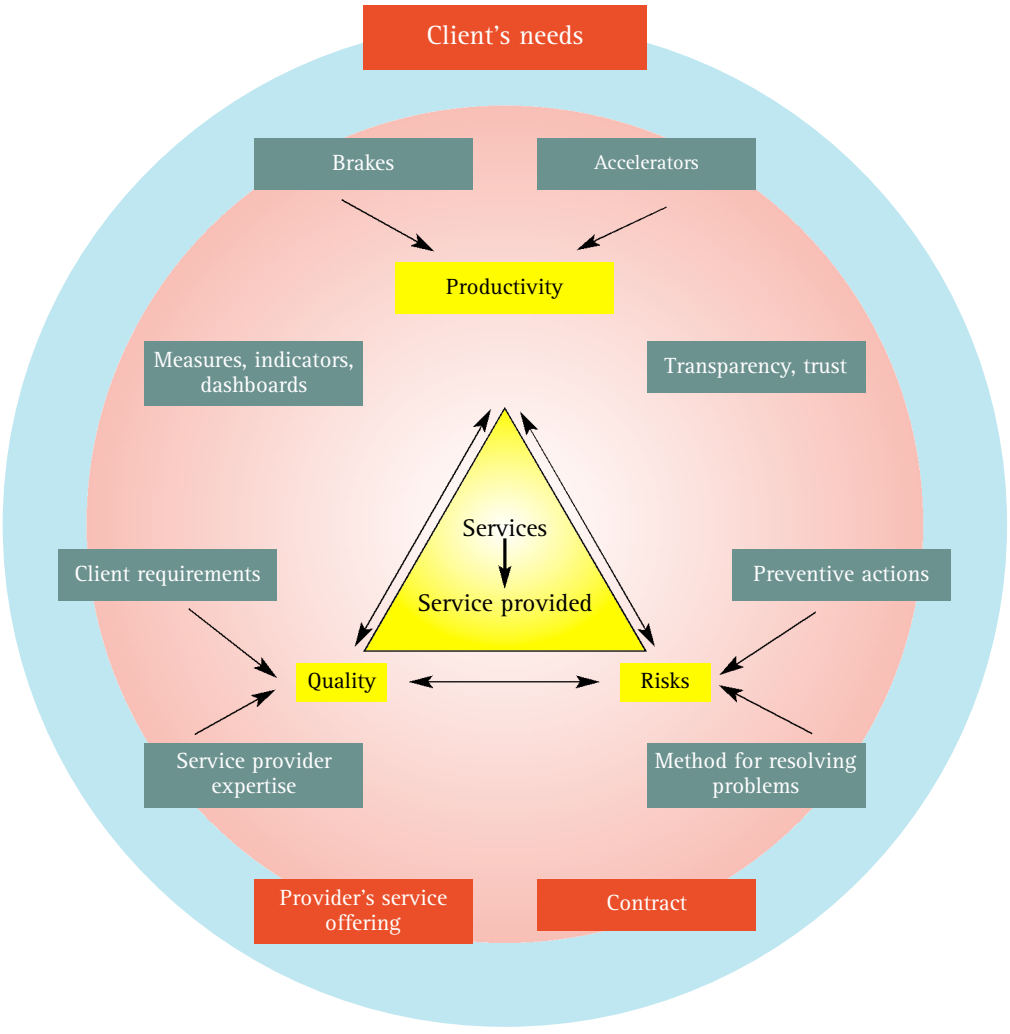
2. Basics of the client / provider relationship

An outsourcing contract requires good co-operation between the client and the service provider, even more so than an engineering project or a consulting service.

This co-operation must meet a certain number of basics, which we wish to evoke briefly in this chapter.

For a detailed description of each of these subjects, please consult the work of the "Engineering / System integration" group for the Cigref-Syntec informatique charter.

2.1. Co-operation diagram



The diagram above presents the main areas of concern at the heart of the relationship between the client and its service provider.

First of all, in the background of the diagram, the consultation procedure cycle, which officially begins with the call for tender, represented by the "specifications" document; the providers respond by describing their service offering in the form of a "proposal"; finally there is the "contract", which seals and clarifies the framework of the agreement, notably by specifying the obligations of each of the signatories.

At the centre of the diagram is a triangle which is made up of two essential elements: the description of the service – notably the work to be carried out by the service provider and the client – and the description of the service provided, which is the subject of the contract.

In order to control both the development of the services and the quality of the service provided, three sets of items must be managed of a common accord and with the same vision by the client and its service provider.

- The quality area is where two things meet: the client's requirements regarding the way to realise and deliver the expected service, and the expertise implemented by the service provider to identify – and then eliminate – the risks, taking into account the nature of the service carried out.
- The prevention and risk area – when correctly managed – is a guarantee that the work will be finished properly, provided that the contract signatories call on a problem-solving solution should there be prolonged or repeated differences regarding one or more types of risk.
- The productivity area, through the identification of brakes which cause unnecessary energy to be expended and through the setting-up of voluntarist actions which speed up decision-making, allows budgeted spending to be controlled and deadlines to be met.

Finally, the setting-up of identical common tools as regards measuring instruments, indicators and dashboards should ensure an identical view of the reality of the situation.

All this can be realised only if transparency and a work atmosphere based on mutual trust can be established.

3. Principal brakes and accelerators for the success of an outsourcing contract

In this chapter we have brought together the main actions which may act as brakes or accelerators in the implementation of an outsourcing contract.

3.1. Vocabulary

Proposal

- Make sure that the client's expression of needs and the service provider's proposals concerning the outsourcing use a vocabulary which is as consistent as possible with the definitions recommended by Cigref and Syntec informatique.

Comment

Over the past few years outsourcing offers have been the subject of much media communication and huge marketing efforts on the part of service providers. The use of terms which are vague or ambiguous or which have vastly different meanings from one provider or one client to another can lead to a lack of understanding.

In this area the definitions proposed by Cigref and Syntec informatique could be consulted.

3.2. Pre-sales

Proposal

- Better explain to service providers the selection criteria (notably the criteria for exclusion) in order to help them to only position themselves if they have a genuine chance to succeed.
- Do not use a pre-sales approach to get free advice or a free benchmark.
- Be especially vigilant as regards the confidentiality of the information.

Comment

The move to outsourcing is an important phase whose impacts (organisation, HR...) must be identified prior to the consultation. This groundwork allows the scope of the consultation to be finalised and better results to be obtained from the service providers. Furthermore, clear expression of the selection criteria allows the consultation to be better targeted and less energy to be wasted on both sides.

A pre-sales approach must not by a means of obtaining free advice or an acculturation of a company faced, for example, with the possibility of offshoring.

All offshoring approaches must therefore be the subject of prior, in-depth reflection within the client company in order to ensure that it corresponds to an operating mode which is applicable to the company.

3.3. Service / Aims

Proposal

- Clearly express the client issues.
- Clearly express and explain the expected service, along with the levels of service, roles and responsibilities.
- Share this vision with all the parties concerned by the project (general management, IT department, HR, business units, service provider).

Comment

Dissatisfaction often stems from objectives which are badly defined or insufficiently shared:

- Service provider which does not have a good view of the business issues or of the criteria according to which the service quality will be measured.
- Expectations of the general management or of the business units which are different to those expressed by the IT department, on which the contract indicators are based.
- Unclear definition of the business units' role
- ...

It is important, on the client side, that all the company

components concerned (general management, IT department, procurement department, HR, business units), have a shared commitment.

3.4. Scope

Proposal

- Share regularly a view of the service's scope, which will obviously need to evolve during the contract and which will require work units which are fair and consistent with its scope, in order to increase the value of the service in a relevant manner.
- Check that one has a sufficiently broad view of a scope (content, associated costs, quality...) which would allow the role to be taken up on the client side before looking to outsource it.

Comment

The very nature of the long-term contractual commitment means that an outsourcing or TAM contract is bound to change (addition or removal of new application scopes, developments in technology...)

It is therefore necessary, in the contract, to outline:

- a precise definition of the scope covered by the service,
- the process to be applied in the event of a change in the scope,
- the way in which each change in the scope is taken into account in the contractual commitments (indicators, service cost, ...)
- the process to be applied in the event of a major upgrade which requires the contract to be renegotiated.

Unlike a system integration project whose price can be set at the beginning based on precise specifications, the pricing of an outsourcing or TAM project must evolve in order to take into account the changes in scope or in the level of service required.

It is therefore advisable, in putting a price on these services, to choose work units which are consistent with the added value and the actual service supplied by the provider.

Within the framework of the steering processes the relevance of the applicable work units must be checked. If necessary, new work units must be defined.

3.5. Human resources

Proposal

- On the client side, make provision for the change support plan (clarification of players' roles, training plan...), which is the key to success of the project.
- Set up the indicators and processes which ensure the competence of the service provider team.
- If a functional project co-ordination commitment is required, limit the client's right to intervene regarding the choice of the means implemented by the service provider.

Comment

The move to outsourcing causes new skills and missions to appear within the client teams (steering, contract, role of prime contracting and functional project co-ordination...). This forces these roles to evolve, and this evolution must be supported.

3.6. Monitoring / Control

Proposal

- Make provision for an effective steering system and apply it throughout the project.
- Define the common technical and contractual dashboards.
- Measure the results against the objectives; inform people of this measurement and share it.
- Organise frequent meetings (communication) even when everything is going well.

Comment

The monitoring and control of outsourcing operations is carried out with regard to a reference system which defines the mutual obligations (provider / client) at different levels of the company. Three stages must be taken into consideration:

- Drawing-up of the reference system
  - finalisation of the service agreements (provider and client),
  - realisation of a quality plan,
  - jointly-established governance method.
- Operational project management
  - setting-up of the service environment (tools, steering and operational committees, indicators, processes etc.).
- Monitoring – Control
  - monitoring and control of indicators with regard to the reference system,
  - improvement processes,
  - joint steering and decision-making.

Several levels of the company are approached according to the types of project (TAM, end-of-life global outsourcing). These different levels are involved during the drawing-up of the reference system and the subsequent monitoring and control stage.

The dashboards present the indicators which have been defined and allow the commitments to be monitored. They generally concern:

- Service quality
  - guarantee of responsiveness (response, correction, delivery deadlines, possible constraints...),
  - flexibility (adaptation to workload peaks and the priorities dealt with in the committee),
  - transparent reporting (detailed dashboards).
- Quality of the application
  - monitoring of the maintainability (respect of the norms, tests, preventive actions...),
  - maintenance of the documentation (documentation adapted for the maintenance),
  - maintenance of the skills (mapping, handbook, training plan).
- Mastery of costs
  - productivity commitment,
  - annual fixed price for basic services,
  - regular detailed monitoring of costs.

3.7. Transfer of responsibility / Legal issues

Proposal

- Make provision for a balanced contract.
- Do not request commitments which are not adapted to the contract (a service provider is not an insurer).
- Prohibit improper or excessive clauses.

Comment

The contract must integrate the notion of 'long-term' by including in particular the fact that the general environment (applications, systems, technical, functional...), as well as the user needs, business processes and economic conditions will most probably evolve before the end of the contract.

It would therefore seem useful to have a contract in two parts – an invariable part (which contains the fixed parts of the contract) and a variable part, which must be reviewed periodically at intervals specified in the invariable part. The variable part may be made up of annexes which each have specific update conditions. Of course, since the length of the contract may naturally create imbalances, there must be a permanent search for balance and equity in all negotiations.

Outsourcing does not mean transferring one's problems to a third party. One must therefore be vigilant, when drawing up any outsourcing contract, as regards possible excessive clauses, such as:

- clauses which do not set limits for responsibility which are consistent with the size of the project, or which require commitments regarding collateral damage,
- contractual or result requirements which are too ambitious and which may put the provider in a difficult position as regards the respecting of local and international legislation or labour laws (excessive volume of work at the weekend...),
- requirements which are mutually incompatible.

3.8. Reversibility / Transferability

Proposal

- Make provision for, and organise, a bona fide reversibility / transferability plan.
- Check throughout the project that this reversibility can actually be instigated.

Comment

All too often the reversibility / transferability is provided for in the contracts, but is brought up infrequently in operational terms. What must notably be identified are the permanent means to be implemented on both sides to guarantee the feasibility of the reversibility phases.

3.9. Taking into account of other IS service providers

Proposal

- Take into account the contracts the client has with other providers (application, hardware, network providers...).
- Clarify the responsibilities vis-à-vis these providers.

Comment

The quality of the service may be heavily impaired by a fault on the part of the provider which is not directly provided for in the contract. It is therefore essential, on drawing up an outsourcing contract, to go over all the contracts which may be directly or indirectly related to the outsourced scope. Any new supplier may be subject to a joint qualification.

3.10. Technical evolution of the information system

Proposal

- Organise from time to time (annually) a study of on the evolution of the information system's technological base, in order to avoid it becoming obsolete.
- Propose shared evolution actions (provider and client).
- Carry out the relevant actions of a common accord and under fair financial and contractual conditions.

Comment

Certain clients sometimes regret that their outsourcing provider "maintains" the information system in perfect working order for many years without alerting them to the risks of obsolescence in the medium term if modernisation work is not carried out.

Modernising the IS in a preventive manner presupposes a shared desire on the part of the client and the provider, since this type of approach can, in the short term (the time needed for the work to be carried out), turn out to be contradictory to the initial objectives of cost reduction and the maintenance of a high level of service.

Furthermore, this type of modernisation is difficult to quantify and to assess far in advance, and it is therefore difficult to integrate it in a fixed-price manner when drawing up an outsourcing contract which is intended to last several years.

3.11. Recourse

Proposal

- Set up a problem-solving method between Syntec informatique and Cigref.
- Do not hesitate to involve third parties before the project reaches alert stage.

Comment

In order for an outsourcing contract to run smoothly, it is preferable to introduce the idea of inspection (detection) of potential conflicts within the framework of the anticipation of risks.

One could imagine this analysis being carried out during the service's "strategic" committee sessions.

The situations which warrant such an external analysis are those where:

- the objectives fixed jointly are systematically not met,
- the service agreement and the indicators used mean that the service provider is systematically liable for penalties,
- it is impossible to come to an agreement on the evolution of the contractual framework (scope, work units, financial conditions, etc...).

4. Proposals of additional actions

From a practical point of view, and beyond the recommendations made for each individual outsourcing project, the workgroup proposes several additional actions to be carried out jointly by Syntec informatique and Cigref with regard to the points of the Charter.

Point 1 – Business knowledge

Proposal 1.1: organise seminars or communication actions to heighten the awareness of General Management or Business Management *vis-à-vis* the stakes and opportunities of outsourcing.

Point 2 – Transparency

Point 3 – Impartiality

Proposal 3.1: draft of an annex to the Charter which proposes a problem-solving method.

Point 4 – Independence of opinion and expression

Point 5 – Quality

Point 6 – Innovation

Proposal 6.1: begin a study of the use of technologies to increase professionalism, quality and productivity within the outsourcing operations.

Point 7 – Circulation of information

Point 8 – Knowledge-sharing

Proposal 8.1: Syntec informatique and Cigref propose that the main outsourcing terms be defined (see paragraph 2 of this document) within a document which would serve as a reference. The experimental norm AFNOR XP Z 67- 801- 1, 2 is worth consideration.

Point 9 – Productivity

Proposal 9.1: start a study (workgroup) on the following theme: “What are the alternatives to offshoring?”

Point 10 – Follow-up of the charter

Engineering and system integration

Contents

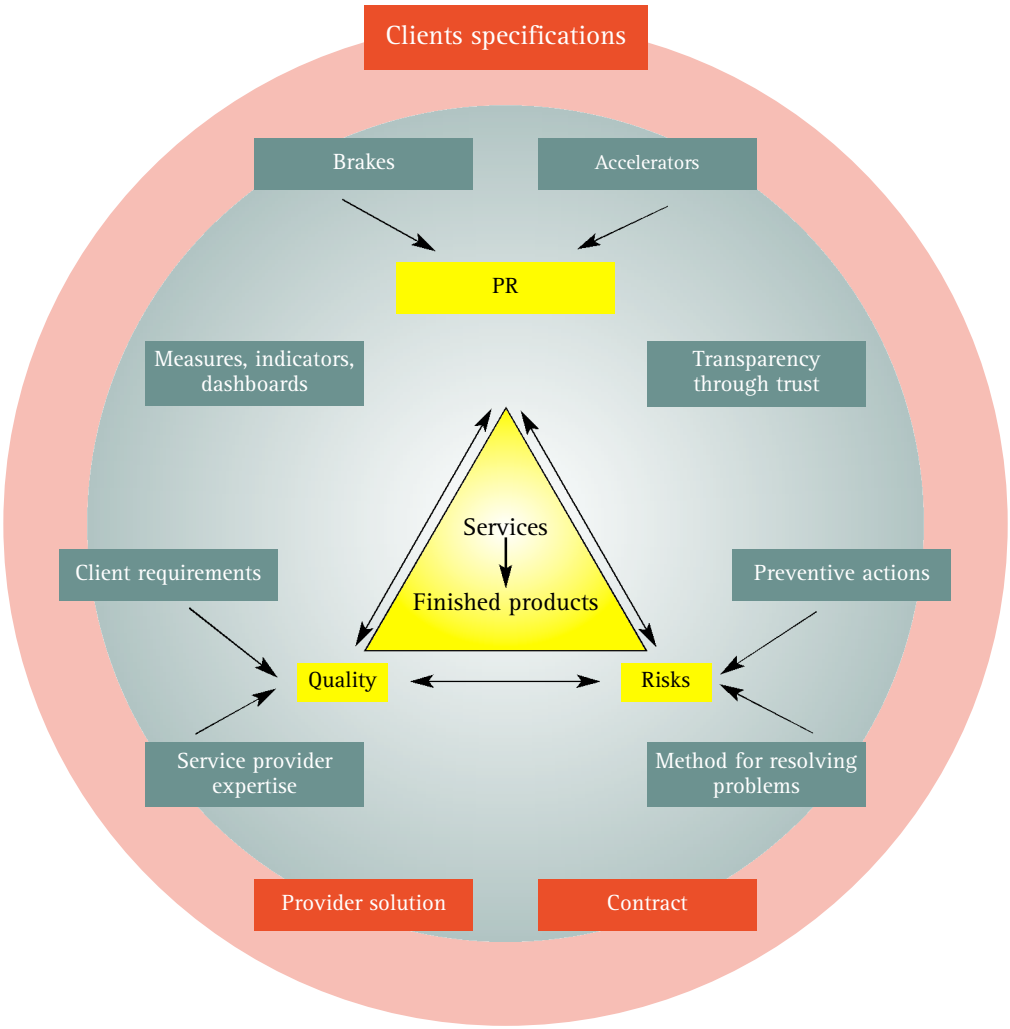
1. General framework

The diagram below presents the main areas of concern at the heart of the relationship between the client and its service provider.

First of all, in the background of the diagram, the consultation procedure cycle, which officially begins with the call for tender, represented by a "proposal" and ends with the "contract", which seals and clarifies the framework of the agreement, notably by specifying the obligations of each of the signatories.

At the centre of the diagram is a triangle which is made up of two essential elements: the description of the service – notably the work to be carried out by the service provider and the client – and the description of the finished products, which is the subject of the contract.

Client / service provider service model



In order to control both the development **of the services and the quality of the finished products**, three sets of items must be managed of a common accord and with the same vision by the client and its service provider.

- The quality area is where two things meet: the client's requirements regarding the way to **realise the service and deliver the finished products** and the expertise implemented by the service provider to identify – and then eliminate – the risks, taking into account the nature of the service carried out.
- The productivity area, through the identification of brakes which cause unnecessary energy to be expended, and through the setting-up of voluntarist actions which speed up decision-making, allows budgeted spending to be controlled and deadlines to be met.
- The prevention and risk area – when correctly managed – is a guarantee that the work will be finished properly, provided that the contract signatories call on a problem-solving solution should there be prolonged or repeated differences regarding one or more types of risk.

Finally, the setting-up of identical common tools as regards measuring instruments, indicators and dashboards should ensure an identical view of the reality of the situation.

All this can be realised only if transparency and a work atmosphere based on mutual trust have been established.

2. Quality: Client requirements / service provider expertise

2.1. The principles

Dissatisfaction – and even disputes – within a project are often the result of different assessments by the two parties in the development of the client-supplier relationship.

Different assessments regarding the aims and issues, different assessments regarding those involved and the methods used, different assessments of the proven results...all of these differences are often detected too late by both parties.

The proposal put forward by the work group is to use as a starting point the work already carried out by Cigref in this area, which aims to set up a dashboard as soon as client specifications have been drafted, which specifies:

- the requirements as regards the processes which will generate the expected services,
- the requirements regarding the results at all levels of the realisation (from virtual status to the signing of the contract, partially realised status, acceptance and operating status).

The dashboard is based on two complementary points of view: the client's perception of the requirements; the supplier's expertise, through an analysis of the risks. If this mechanism were introduced into the specifications during the call for tender, it would allow the supplier to draw up its proposal for all the indicators for which it needs to provide solutions and which will serve to evaluate its performance:

Client perception (Requirement)	➡	Supplier expertise (Risk analysis)	➡	Actions defined by the supplier

This dashboard then guarantees that the project runs smoothly – the relationship is based on the transparency of the aims and of the performance criteria.

Of course, the dashboard proposed in the specifications cannot be exhaustive – the indicators need to be adapted of a common accord by a joint steering committee as soon as the negotiation phase begins and then as the project progresses, but it will serve as a permanent common theme throughout the project's life cycle.

Once the indicators have been defined, it is essential that the changes in them be measured regularly (any indicator which does not have a factual measuring method cannot be used) and that they be analysed. How many projects appear to be "unsatisfactory" simply because the indicators do not have factual units of measurement, but are instead open to interpretation? Furthermore, the appraisal is often carried out after the start of the project and becomes quickly frustrating, since it is too late to react.

2.2. Client requirements

Since each project is a specific case, the work group does not claim to provide an exhaustive list of the criteria. However, we have identified certain essential components for which indicators must be defined.

We propose the following areas:

2.2.1. Project process requirements

- Management, organisation and partnership: those in charge of contracting and functional project management coordinate in order to monitor the project,
- Project management: formalisation of the SQP (service quality plan), monitoring of all the progression indicators (workload, costs, deadlines...) and communication,
- Means and resources: balance between means and needs (stability of teams, continuity of resources, **level of qualification**, service continuity...),
- Sub-contracting and supplies: description and respecting of commitments,
- Methods and tools: description of each component with regard to the objectives,
- Technology: contributions and risks,
- Realisation: standards and deliverables.

2.2.2. Result requirements

- Terms of reference and specifications: this involves checking that the issues, aims and constraints of the project have been identified and taken into account,
- Mock-ups: means of confirming the user's acceptance,
- Service contracts: validation, through benchmarking, of the levels of service and operational performance,
- Tests and user acceptance: formalisation of the user acceptance process and responsibilities,
- Training and development of the organisation: principles, methods and measurement of training,
- Operation: preparation of the operational environment,
- Maintenance: preparation, rules and measures.

Once the client requirements have been specified, both regarding processes and results, an analysis of the risks allows alert indicators and solutions to be included in the dashboard for project monitoring.

2.3. Supplier expertise

2.3.1. Project process risks

- Management, organisation and partnership: identification and assessment of the possible breakdowns in responsibilities and definitions,
- Project management: identification and assessment of the causes of deviations in the management of the project,
- Means and resources: insufficient or inadequate means,
- Methods and tools: poor understanding of the methods and tools,
- Technology: non-mastery of new technologies or decline in performance,
- Realisation: non-durable architecture, complexity of the result, inconsistency.

2.3.2. Result risks

- Terms of reference and specifications: non-exhaustive and unrealistic specifications, insufficient advice, impossibility of attaining the contractual operational performances.
- Mock-ups: rejection of the service,
- Service contracts: insufficient technical benchmarking of the levels of service and the operational performances,
- Tests and user acceptance: lack of service reliability and stability,
- Training and development of the organisation: resistance to change,
- Operation: difficulty in adaptation,
- Maintenance: complexity in the long term.

The approach proposed for the quality objective of the Cigref-Syntec informatique charter can thus be summed up in 3 points:

- Compilation of a check-list of the fundamentals accepted by both parties.
- Possibility – for certain points – of referring to standardised elements without seeking exhaustive coverage.
- Use of this check-list by both parties during the main stages of the project.

The elements proposed for the check-list are as follows:

N°	Stage	Control point	Control details	Methodology help [1]
1	Pre-project or project launch	Management of requirements	■ Each of the parties' deliverables (products and services) are listed. ■ The acceptation criteria for these deliverables are detailed. ■ Any ambiguities are removed or their removal is scheduled.	CMM [4] level 2 ISO 9001 / 7.2
2	Pre-project or project launch	Project life cycle	■ The project's stages (phases or cycles) are described with the associated deliverables. ■ A marker indicating validation by both parties is planned for the end of each stage.	CMM level 2
3	Pre-project or project launch	Indicator management	■ Indicators are defined, in line with the project's aims. ■ Without any other specific definition, the ratio of software / requirements conformity [2] and the respected deadline ratio [3] are two possible indicators. ■ A detailed service convention is drawn up at the same time as the expected service results.	ISO 9001 / 5.4
4	Project	Configuration management	■ The requests for requirement changes which have been accepted are recorded. ■ All of the project components are updated in a consistent manner, taking into account the impacts of the changes.	CMM level 2
5	Project	User acceptance design	■ The acceptance specifications are drawn up by the user (client) representative in a synchronous manner and at the same time as the manufacturing specifications are drawn up by the supplier, and they are validated jointly.	
6	Project	Traceability	■ The main documents retracing the progress of the project, the events and the decisions taken (including the steering committee report) are kept for reasons of mutual understanding for up to a year after the start of the project.	ISO 9001 / 4.2
7	Project	Client satisfaction	■ A system for collecting the client's feedback is proposed by the supplier. ■ In the absence of any other system, an item on the steering committee agenda will be the recording of the client's expectations and its perception of the supplier's level of coverage of these expectations.	ISO 9001 / 8.2.1
8	Project acceptance	Execution of the acceptance	■ User acceptance is carried out by the client in an environment which is as close as possible to that of the end user. ■ The two parties agree on the priorities to be used in order that the supplier be able to correct and deliver the non-conformities.	
9	Project end	Project appraisal	■ At the end of the project an appraisal, carried out jointly, examines the delivery of the products and services, the running of the project and the key points to be capitalised on with a view to the future.	

(1): the "methodology help" column is indicated solely as a possible aid.
(2): conformity ratio (%): anomaly correction workload / initial total workload.
(3): respected deadline ratio (%): total workload of the batches delivered on time / total initial workload.
(4): CMM: Capability Maturity Model

Conclusion

There is an old Chinese proverb which says: *"If you want to progress quickly and safely, take your time"*. The requirements and risks dashboard approach that we propose illustrates this. Taking the time to identify and make known the fundamental elements of the project and ensuring that the risks have been measured and that solutions have been planned makes the client-supplier relationship transparent and facilitates the implementation of continuous monitoring and any timely corrective action which might be needed.

The integration of this dashboard into the contract ensures that the project will run properly.

3. Project productivity: how do you identify the brakes and act on the accelerators?

3.1. Supply of energy

One of the laws of physics states that "any change from one state to another requires a supply of energy. The supply of energy is the trigger and the driving force of the reaction; its objective is to fight against the inertia of stable states".

An IT project is subject to the same constraints: certain elements are stable and have no reason to change – they are the brakes to progress; others are driving forces and must give impetus to change – they are the accelerator elements.

A project's success is linked to the impetus behind the changes and the reduction of all the brakes, in order to save energy which should be used to reach the goal. Knowing these elements, assessing their impact and importance and reducing the negative effects allows one to define the level of risk and the areas of progress on which the client and the supplier must concentrate in order to meet the objectives.

We propose the examination of these two types of criteria and their impact.

3.2. Brakes

Among the elements that will be mentioned are some that have already been (or should be) identified as risks. These are major brakes. Unfortunately, although they are not as important, other elements also slow down the change process and must be combatted in order to increase the effectiveness of the project.

The majority of the brakes are behavioural attitudes of those involved in the project, whether in-house or external:

3.2.1. On a management level: besides the major criteria of availability and prime contracting / functional project co-ordination skills, the criteria of "power" and "transparency" are the most common:

- personal interest in conflict with the general interest,
- power through the keeping of information or isolation,
- complexity of projects' matrix organisations,
- insufficient communication,
- difficulty in justifying the return on investment.

3.2.2. On a technical level

- difficulty in adapting to new techniques,
- badly-managed quality,
- what is urgent replacing what is important.

3.2.3. On a user level

- refusal to question behaviour and habits,
- absence of behavioural and relational rules,
- decrease in individual sense of responsibility,
- quality seen as calling performance into question.

All these potential brakes require the organisation of permanent communication throughout the project's life cycle. The ideal thing would be to have a "change management plan" like in marketing campaigns for new products.

3.3. Accelerators

3.3.1. Project management: these elements are additional methods to strengthen cohesion:

- team seminar: to increase motivation, define the behavioural and relational rules, choose methods,
- steering committee communication: draw up and publish regular factual appraisals in order to turn the project into a company project,
- prime contracting assistance,
- planning cell in charge of measuring and monitoring indicators independently of the realisation teams,
- formalisation of the service contracts in order to specify what is done and what will not be taken into account.

3.3.2. Organisation and methods

- brief but frequent information meetings on the project developments,
- integration of a manager into the project teams,
- controlled management of the processing of anomalies and of the requests for changes,
- leadership, communication,
- collaborative communication and work tool,
- quality dashboard.

3.3.3. Quality management

- general mobilisation of the CEO and all the personnel,
- use of norms and standards,
- benchmarking which improves the learning curve through the experience of others.

In conclusion

Requirements and risks are elements which can be clearly identified - represented in the shape of indicators and measured factually - and are therefore easy to monitor in the project dashboard. The behavioural aspects – often linked to insufficient change management – are often harder to grasp, but they can have significant consequences including, sometimes, the rejection of the service. It is dangerous to underestimate them. Reviewing these brakes regularly allows the triggering of accelerators which will rapidly counter the adverse effects.

4. Prevention and risks: Project management through the control of risks

The risk factors which threaten the successful execution – and above all the successful conclusion – of a project are constant. They often appear at key moments of the project cycle.

4.1. Service definition and scope

The definition and scope of the service are major risk elements. It is natural for the players involved in a project to want to broaden its framework whilst it is in progress. Two critical moments in particular need to be monitored: the very start of the project, since it is the first time that the scope is defined in such a precise manner, and, paradoxically, the end of the project, when all that has been developed must be operational. It is at this moment that one discovers the functionalities which are missing, but which are essential for the launch of the system.

There are several fundamental points to be monitored more specifically:

- In the initial phase:
  - Initial expression of needs: level of details, concrete examples, reference to additional descriptions, etc.
  - Project scope: functions, flow, data, players, processes, etc.
  - Type and complexity of the solution: Has the solution already been implemented? Is the technology used recognised and tried-and-tested? etc.
  - Associated provisions and services: Has the breakdown of roles between the players realising the project been properly defined? Have the services which must be realised by these different players been specified?
- During the project:
  - Stability of the needs, scope, solutions.
  - Traceability of the changes related to the needs, scope and solution.
  - Conformity of the provisions, as they are produced.

4.2. The users

The users are the principal actors in this play. Their numbers, the diversity of profiles, the changes in representatives, the political games they are involved in, the broad spectrum of their needs – all of these parameters increase considerably the level of risk.

A few fundamental points need to be checked:

- The maturity of the different players with regard to the subject in question, key representatives who are sufficiently mobilised, ability to make decisions quickly, capacity to co-operate.
- Marking-out of decisions: Reports, user acceptance specifications, user acceptance.

4.3. Requirements

On most projects the constraints imposed lead to a marked increase in the risk.

Several points need to be checked:

- Norms, development tools, system architecture. When these elements are imposed and no longer reflect the state-of-the-art, they can be a source of problems during the development of the application.
- High-risk software packages, inadequate performance with regard to the process in question, unreliable applications developed by other structures which must be integrated into the system, objective of the project.

4.4. Scheduling and monitoring

Exceeding the workload and the deadline are the classic risks of a project. The points which need to be controlled more specifically are as follows:

- incompatible workload / deadline or progress / consumption ratios;
- teams' skills / subject suitability;
- exhaustiveness of the tasks, monitoring rhythm;
- Structure and organisation of teams, increased workload of teams, involvement of hierarchy, stability of teams, logistics, etc.

4.5. Contractual coverage

Several points need to be monitored:

- Is the contract signed?
- Have the user acceptance procedures been properly specified?
- Insufficiently detailed contractual division regarding phases, batches, etc.
- Notification of sub-contractors and possibilities in terms of commitment.
- Confidentiality.
- Etc.

5. Trust as a factor in transparency

The aim of this final chapter is to define the guidelines for the construction of the relational framework which unites client and supplier within an engineering project. Whilst it is true that the client / supplier relationship can sometimes appear conflicting, an approach based on a relationship of trust is a factor in meeting the objectives fixed in the realisation of a project.

It is therefore a factor for mutual profit between the IT department and the service provider. Despite the methodological and technical aspects, which are particularly important in this context, the reader will find below certain psychological and behavioural factors whose importance should probably not be ignored.

5.1. Notion of a tribe

The IT department and the service provider are part of the IT community – they share mutual interests and a natural ability to communicate. Despite the diversity of aims linked to the client / supplier relationship, they do share a common language, common experiences, common successes and common expertise, as well as a duty to industrialise the profession which allows them to provide services, added value and opportunities for return on investment for their mutual client, in the case in point the functional departments of the company, which use IT tools mainly as a means to improve the productivity of daily operations.

5.2. Moral contract

There is therefore a *de facto* moral contract between the two partners within the realisation of an IT engineering project. The stronger this moral contract is, the more mutual respect there will be and the better the chances are that the project will be successful. In order to achieve this, it is essential that:

- the project issues and aims be recognised, shared, integrated and accepted by each of the partners;
- the consequences of the aims not being achieved be clearly specified, recognised and shared;
- the sanctions linked to the aims not being achieved be known in advance and their implementation be decided of a common accord in accordance with the prevailing equity and economic contingencies;
- the requirements be shared, whilst remaining constantly within the realms of what each partner can do;
- an explicit agreement and a reciprocal acceptance of the contractual clauses be drawn up.

5.3. Acceptance of the other party's preoccupations

It is perfectly clear that the context can make these requirements particularly difficult to integrate. It is therefore necessary to:

- share and exchange on all the issues which emerge throughout the project;
- communicate to both client and supplier teams regarding the corporate cultures right from the start of the project (or even before), in order to create an environment conducive to exchange;
- communicate with the other party regarding its perception of the quality of the realisation. This should be done as early as possible and then on a regular basis in order to avoid a communication breakdown, which would be highly detrimental to the smooth running of the project;
- respect and accept the constraints of the other partner, be they operational, technical or financial, in order to leave the project's possible 'emergency exits' open.

5.4. Decompartmentalisation of teams

The project teams work together for a lengthy period of time in an environment which is constrained by external contingencies and which inevitably creates tension. The negative impact of this tension on the project must be reduced to a bare minimum. In order to do this, we recommend a positive energy approach:

- ensure the proximity of teams;
- encourage certain festive aspects: project kick-off, break-out sessions during realisation, shared parties, celebration of deliveries... all of these things bring together all or part of the project teams.

5.5. Management of shared activities

Since its main role is oriented towards meeting the project's objectives, the project management team has a particularly important role to play in the creation of a favourable environment. In particular it must:

- favour the anticipation of any conflicts, with a view to resolving them before they even appear;
- formalise the exchanges during project meetings and obtain explicit agreement and sharing from the partners on key points;
- ensure joint publication of key information;
- display certain project indicators publicly, so that all the team members are aware of where the project stands.

5.6. Alignment of operating methods

Prior to the start of the project, it is essential that communication tools be on the same wavelength. The following points must be respected if this crucial objective is to be met:

- include the roll-out of the project in the contract – this ensures, at the end of the period of commercial negotiation, that the two partners (IT department and service provider) are clearly in agreement on what is to be realised;
- share and exchange on the operating method – this ensures, at the end of the period of commercial negotiation, that the two partners (IT department and service provider) are clearly in agreement on the way in which things will be realised;
- implement some form of common communication – this ensures, at the end of the period of commercial negotiation, that the two partners (IT department and service provider) are clearly in agreement on the communication method;
- align the vocabulary and create common dictionaries - this ensures, at the end of the period of commercial negotiation, that the two partners (IT department and service provider) are clearly in agreement on the means of communication.

Finally, it is essential that, throughout the project, each of the partners undertake to communicate with the other openly and on the basis of specific, tangible indicators.

Organisation and information system consulting

Contents

1. General framework

1.1. Typology of consulting professions

The common objective of consulting missions is to help client companies and organisations to change, both in terms of information systems and technologies and in terms of organisation and managment.

Beyond this common objective, each client's context is unique, each mission specific. Consulting missions may therefore differ greatly as regards content, may call on various skills and may result in many varied deliverables. It is therefore essential, if the mission is to be successful, that a consultant's skills and the intellectual capital of his / her company be adapted.

In order to facilitate agreement between the parties involved on the expected services, the client's commitments and the mission's performance indicators, four main types of missions and professions have been defined. Specific deliverables and, generally, a level of responsibility of the principal correspond to each of these types. Each type of contract should be dealt with separately. The different consulting professions are described in the table below:

1.1.1. Strategic consulting consists in drawing up a business plan, a selection or target analysis document (external growth) for the management of a company or a public organisation, including, more specifically, the management committee, the CEO or even the shareholders or trustees. The proposal detailing the length and the limits of the commitment, including the terms of closure, is considered to be the first of the mission's deliverables.

1.1.2. Management and organisation consulting aims to produce not only a status report, scenarios or a selection document (external growth), but also an implementation plan, including training and communication aspects. The principals are generally general management, a business unit (or prime contracting) manager or a CIO.

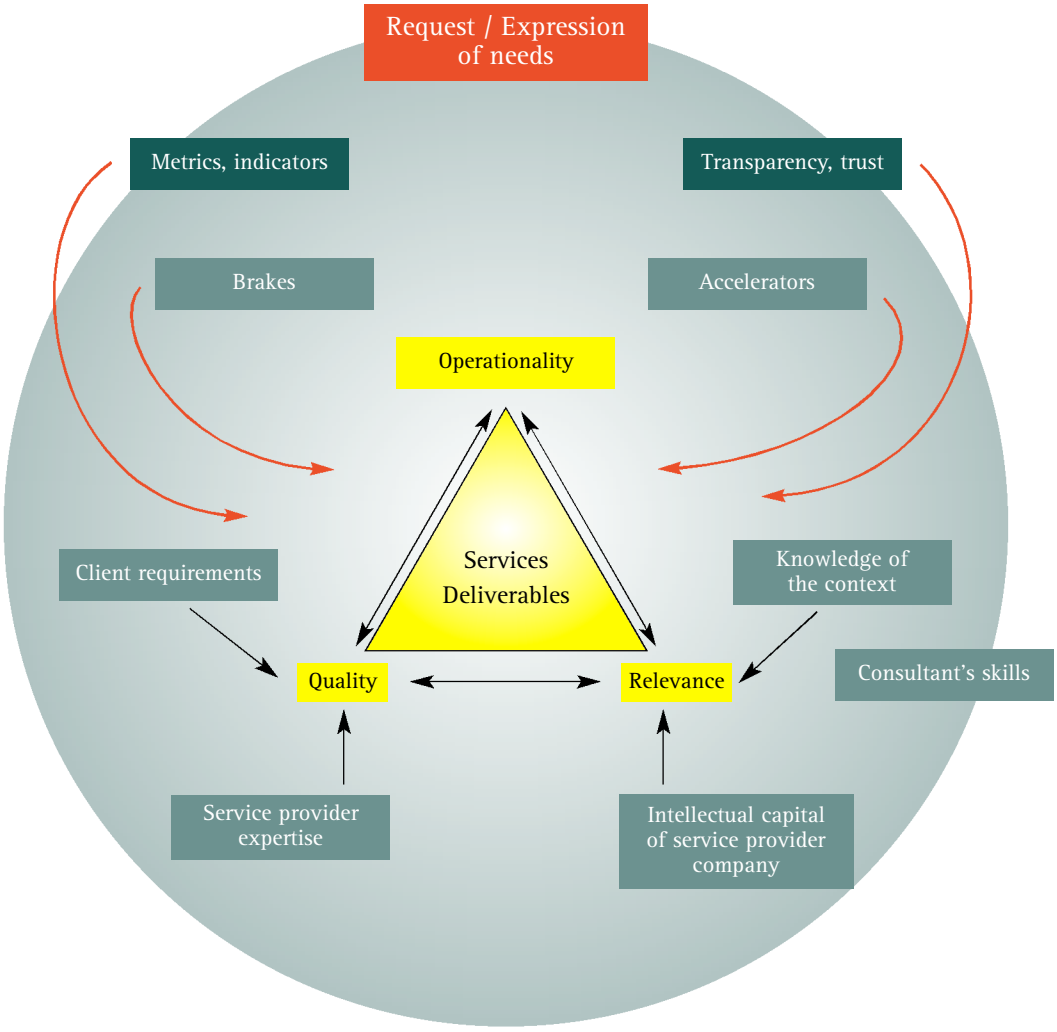
1.1.3. Information system consulting includes, beyond a status report, scenarios or a selection document, specifications, the deployment and steering of dashboards and risks and the change support, whether it involves training, communication or documentation. The client for this type of mission is often a CIO, an IT functional executive or a prime contractor.

1.1.4. Infrastructure consulting, most commonly for the IT department or its executives (architecture) includes specifications, a monitoring methodology such as risk management, roll-out support and financial analysis.

Characteristics	Strategic consulting	Management & Organisation consulting	IS consulting	Infrastructure consulting
Principals	• Management committee • CEO • Shareholders • Trustees	• CEO • Business units • Prime contractor • IT department	• IT department • IT executives (functional) • Prime contractor	• IT department • IT executives (architecture)
Deliverables	• Selection document • Proposed target (description) • Proposal detailing length and limits of commitment (terms of closure) • Business plan	• Status report, scenarios, selection document • Implementation plan • Training • Communication	• Status report, scenarios, selection document • Allotted deliverables within the mission's framework • Specifications • Steering: dashboards and prime contracting risks • Change support	• Monitoring methodology (risk management...) • Specifications • Roll-out support • Financial analysis
Examples	• Corporate consulting (mergers / acquisitions) • CRM • Purchasing	• Improvement in operation of all or part of the company • IT governance: organisation and operation of IT department (employees, tools, procedures...)	• Functional design of IS (user-oriented) • Detailed design or products (ERP...) • Technical design • Implementation support • IS mapping, architecture	• Audit and diagnosis of operations • Security • Risk management • Use of application software packages

1.2. Co-operation model: operationality, quality and relevance

The following diagram shows the main areas of pre-occupation in the client / provider relationship within the framework of consulting services.



1.2.1. Remarks on the diagram's symbolic system

Every mission begins formally with a request or expression of needs which are translated into reference terms – the contractual basis of the relationship.

At the centre of the diagram we can see a triangle which represents the object of the mission: the service and the deliverables.

The success of the mission requires 3 essential ingredients:

■ Quality: Harmony between the client's demands and the consultant's methods on the way to carry out the mission and the receipt of the deliverables.

■ Relevance: The skills of the consultant, the intellectual capital of the company and the knowledge of the context provided by the client.

■ The operationality or the ability of the mission to result in recommendations which are applicable in the client's context.

Depending on the importance of the mission, the setting-up of metrics and indicators which are regularly monitored will facilitate a common vision of the position of the mission.

More than in any other area, trust and transparency are essential factors in ensuring that the mission runs smoothly.

1.2.2. Principal brakes and accelerators

The criteria below – depending on whether they are present or not – will constitute either brakes or accelerators in the success of the mission:

■ **Project management:**

- Launch note and terms of reference
- Regular collection and communication of factual information
- Provision by the client of a single correspondent
- Planning and definition of the teams

- Definition of the deliverables

■ **Organisation and method:**

- Regular exchange with the principal
- Controlled management of requests for changes to the mission
- Operational deliverable

■ **Leadership and communication:**

- Communication and collaborative work tool
- Quality dashboard

■ **Operationality management:**

- Mobilisation of the decision-makers concerned
- Use of methods and best practices
- Right distribution of expertise, method and logistical support in the consultant team (according to consulting professions)

2. The essential keys to success

The consulting profession infers a professional code of ethics and a commitment within the operationality of the recommended solution which is then validated by the client. This is formalised by a genuine desire to understand and integrate the client's expectations, an expertise and the provision not of a range of people but of a range of services. These services are based on the intellectual capital of the company and provide the expected contributions (see below paragraph 2.2. "The operating framework"). These services are realised at a fair price which conveys the added value created by the services. Withdrawal – and, by extension, the ability to terminate the mission once the objectives have been met – is an essential condition of the profession.

An operating framework is proposed for each consulting profession which is the application of the Cigref – Syntec informatique charter and the 10 orientations drawn up by the members.

2.1. Roll-out of the charter's orientations

The operating framework proposed for the four consulting professions fits the charter's orientations in the following way.

2.1.1. Business knowledge

Consulting is a profession which is almost non-existent within companies.

Mutual knowledge of the consulting business and of the business of the client's team members is essential for mutual understanding and effective collaboration.

2.1.2. Transparency

Transparency is the basis of trust, and is essential if a consulting mission is to succeed.

2.1.3. Impartiality

The most important aspects of impartiality within the consulting profession are primarily the result of transparency. For the service provider, the first step towards impartiality is the right – and the duty – to refuse a mission.

2.1.4. Independence of opinion and expression

The assertion within their respective professions that Cigref and Syntec informatique are the legitimate representatives of, and speak freely for, their professions is essential.

Within the process of a consulting mission ways must be found to express one's ideas and to avoid falling into the trap of a doctrinaire approach.

2.1.5. Quality

The quality specific to consulting missions could be reasserted in order to clarify the minimum steps to be taken by the service provider and the implications for, and resulting steps to be taken by, the client.

2.1.6. Innovation

The notion of innovation must be taken into account during a consulting mission. This innovation may concern new technologies or clients' business. Major efforts have been made by the members of Cigref and Syntec informatique in order to monitor these innovations. The sharing of some of these actions would allow increased efficiency and better exploitation of the complementary nature of the companies.

2.1.7. Circulation of information

During a consulting mission the benefits are shared. Service providers often ask clients to communicate after the event about the services carried out. It would seem preferable to anticipate this communication together.

As far as commercial relationships are concerned, "quality at the right price" is the concern of all involved.

2.1.8. Knowledge-sharing

Making up a common team obviously highlights the notion of sharing from the very beginning of the mission. This is truer of consulting than of other professions. It would therefore seem interesting to try to have the different members refer, on the whole, to shared values.

Furthermore it would seem important not to lose the mutual added value to be gained from a consulting mission. The review at the end of the mission can also be used to recap what has been done during other missions (successes and failures).

2.1.9. Productivity

One has to distinguish between the consulting mission and the consequences it has when the recommendations are carried out in the months that follow.

The productivity of a consulting service is monitored within the framework of quality control. The success of the company is the yardstick by which it can be measured.

The assessment of the consequences of a service is rarely formalised, and the weakness of the measurement tool is often a critical factor. Such an assessment is based on the assumption that the client and the service provider have tried to predict the consequences.

2.1.10. Follow-up

A quarterly review – and an annual appraisal – of the progress and the co-ordination of the implementation of the consulting workgroup's proposals should be carried out.

2.2. The operating framework

The operating framework outlines the roll-out of the charter's aforementioned undertakings for each of the

4 consulting professions in the following areas:

- the benefits expected from the service provider,
- the client's commitments,
- the measurement indicators.

Future areas of improvement of the charter are suggested in chapter 3.

2.2.1. Strategic consulting

Expected benefits

The benefits expected from the service provider cover the following categories:

- an information base of the market's best practices (benchmarks)
- an external view and permanent monitoring of innovations,
- sectional, regulatory and financial skills linked to the client's sector of activity,
- models and methodologies which are the concrete expression of the thoughts and demonstrations proposed.

Client commitments

In order for the consultant to be able to carry this type of intervention through to a successful conclusion, the client has the following responsibilities:

- the transparency of its operational approach, which is demonstrated through an explicit expression of needs and a commitment to provide the consultant with the information needed,
- the involvement of management and the specific involvement of the representatives concerned,
- the respect of the company's decision-support process,
- the acknowledgement of the value added by the consultant and a remuneration in line with this value.

Measurement indicators

Depending on the strategic consulting mission carried out, the indicators used to measure the effectiveness of the mission cover the following main transformation indicators:

- Work indicators: redeployment and retraining, employment continuity, training, job / skills, etc.
- Financial indicators: standard profitability ratios, etc.
- Commercial indicators: market-share, new clients, development of loyalty, etc.
- Image indicators: external and internal repositioning.

2.2.2. Management and organisation consulting

Expected benefits

The benefits expected from the service provider cover the following categories:

- a road map covering the change management which defines the parameters of the intervention within fixed boundaries,
- a base of best practices and a knowledge of the issues in the sector of intervention and in the client's market,
- proven methodologies, as well as modelling and simulation tools recognised by the market,
- the energy needed to transform through motivation and teams' "pro-activeness",
- the ability to innovate and use new technologies,
- a transfer of skills to the company's team members,
- the taking into consideration of the specific nature and structures of the company.

Client commitments

In order for the consultant to be able to carry this type of intervention through to a successful conclusion, the client has the following responsibilities:

- a desire to evolve or to change, which is expressed through clear objectives and the production of an expression of needs,
- the identification of a principal with established leadership capabilities,
- operation in project mode and the availability of the representatives concerned,
- a search for shared benefits with the consultant through the definition of success fees in the event of the objectives being met.

Measurement indicators

The indicators used to measure the effectiveness of the mission cover the following two categories:

- the respecting of the proposed scenario (operational and financial criteria),
- performance indicators (productivity, quality, cost).

2.2.3. Information system consulting

Expected benefits

The benefits expected from the service provider cover the following categories:

- proven methodologies and techniques,
- a knowledge of best practices in terms of architecture, infrastructure and application solutions,
- an industrial approach to IT and to the use of information technologies,
- a expertise conveyed by trained staff and operational knowledge of the technologies and solutions,
- concrete experience of the client's business (or responsibilities),
- knowledge of the connection of information systems (merger, adaptation, links),
- the independence of the advice given (hardware, software, services) and of the assessment of the risks attached to the recommended solutions.

Client commitments

In order for the consultant to be able to carry this type of intervention through to a successful conclusion, the client has the following responsibilities:

- the identification of the principal,
- clear decision-support and responsibility for the intervention,
- the transparency and clarity of the objectives,
- availability of the representatives and the acceptance of the prime contracting and functional project co-ordination teams.

Measurement indicators

The indicators used to measure the effectiveness of the mission cover the following categories:

- return on investment (ROI) indicators,
- indicators measuring the quality and upgradability of the solutions presented.

2.2.4. Infrastructure consulting

Expected benefits

The benefits expected from the service provider cover the following categories:

- operational expertise in the technologies concerned,
- industrial approach, methodologies, best practices and operational knowledge of the infrastructures,
- knowledge of the changes in the IT business (outsourcing, third-party application maintenance, etc.),
- knowledge of the connection of infrastructures.

Client commitments

In order for the consultant to be able to carry this type of intervention through to a successful conclusion, the client has the following responsibilities:

- the provision of human and documentary reference points,
- decision-support processes, responsibility and aims which are all clear within the framework of the intervention,
- the availability of the representatives in a stable context.

Measurement indicators

The indicators used to measure the effectiveness of the mission cover the following categories:

- performance criteria (volumes, response time, etc.),
- infrastructure costs (investment, operation).

3. Proposals for improvements in the application of the charter

From a practical standpoint the workgroup aimed to facilitate the achievement of previously defined aims by proposing a catalogue of actions regarding the application of the charter, broken down according to the charter's main themes.

These improvements may prove to have a generic impact (when adapted to the other professions of Syntec informatique).

3.1. Business knowledge

Proposal 3.1.1:

Using the 2002 Cigref nomenclature as a guide, draw up a common nomenclature of consulting professions.

3.2. Transparency

Proposal 3.2.1:

Draw up a "communal rules" document for the operation of the joint team (client – service provider) in charge of a consulting mission; this document will specify in particular the ways in which transparency can be obtained.

3.3. Impartiality

Proposal 3.3.1:

Respect the operating method of fair competition with regard to calls for tender (in particular, avoid consulting an excessive number of service providers).

Proposal 3.3.2:

Communicate to the bidders a report on the study of the calls for tender (as is done in the public sector).

Proposal 3.3.3:

Provide measures which allow "withdrawal" (the client is able to continue, if it wishes, without the help of the service provider).

3.4. Independence of opinion and expression

Proposal 3.4.1:

Draw up a reference document listing the principles and the common vocabulary.

3.5. Quality

Proposal 3.5.1:

Draw up a quality charter for consulting missions which includes, in particular, global ratios of the means to be committed for each type of service or work unit, both for the service provider and for the client.

Proposal 3.5-2:

On joining Syntec informatique, each member undertakes to respect the consulting quality charter.

3.6. Innovation

Proposal 3.6.1:

Set up structures for exchanges on business knowledge and the possibilities offered by new technologies.

Proposal 3.6.2:

Organise joint information days on new client business, on a new technology or even on the social indicators of a "durable enterprise".

Proposal 3.6.3:

Ask that the social modernisation aspect (human components, jobs, workforce skills...) be taken into account in every consulting mission, in order to have a long-term view of the company's information system.

3.7. Circulation of information

Proposal 3.7.1:

Common preparation and organisation of the circulation of messages underlining the value of the services carried out.

3.8. Knowledge-sharing

Proposal 3.8.1:

Carry out a common valuation at the end of a mission by means of an appraisal meeting.

3.9. Productivity

Proposal 3.9.1:

Provide for an optional phase which would allow the service provider to check – 6 months after the procedures have been set up – whether the client has imple-

mented the service provider's recommendations, and what the results are.

3.10. Follow-up

Proposal 3.10.1:

Organise the different schemes related to the propositions made and identify the means needed.

Proposal 3.10.2:

Run a Cigref - Syntec informatique steering group for the consulting aspects.

Conclusion

In the galaxy of service professions, consulting occupies a special place: it is the only one that is exercised independently of specific software or hardware technology.

This particularity has often led clients to be wary of a profession whose basis and added value seem so abstract that it has been called a virtual profession.

The work carried out by the group was oriented towards a pedagogical goal *vis-à-vis* the principals and the service providers.

The aim was to demonstrate that the consulting profession is a bona fide profession, with its different types, its mutual demands and its measurable and demonstrable added value.

This approach requires almost introspective upstream thinking on the part of the client and should allow the principal to be identified in a precise way. It should be pointed out that the latter must be an identifiable individual who will be the sole representative and who will have his / her own commitments.

For the service provider, the fact that the service is of an intellectual nature does not exclude the identification and provision of deliverables. The group therefore listed and provided examples of the expected output for each of the types of profession defined as regards consulting.

The added value of the consulting service should be measurable according to a co-operation model based on quality, relevance and operationality.

Finally, the credibility of the role will be reinforced through the desire to determine from the outset of the mission its length and conditions of closure in order to reach a common definition of the limits of the commitment.

These ten themes of the current Cigref - Syntec informatique charter should be amendable according to mutual good practice commitments adapted to this profession, which is, after all, definable and mutually opposable.

Software packages

Contents

1. Preamble

1.1. Definitions

A software package is a "complete and documented set of programmes designed to be supplied to several users of the same application or function".

The notion of software package covers three main categories:

- **basic - or system - software packages** - which include operating systems, compilers, resource management monitors, functionalities which concern the interconnection with data transmission networks and, more generally, any programmes which contribute to the operation of PCs and the management of their peripherals.
- **tool – or utility – software packages** – which include programme design tools (programme / data / documentation generators, report editors, ...), data management tools (file management, DBMS, data directories, ...), tools linked to work accounting, utilities, conversion tools, tools to aid programme security, administration and maintenance (data protection, recovery procedures, library, etc.) generally, products which allow improvements to be made to productivity and performance.
- **application software packages**, which are themselves divided into two main categories: inter-industry – or horizontal – packages, such as payroll, accounting, personnel management, financial management, production management, sales administration, etc.; sectional – or vertical – packages, which concern economic sectors such as banking, real estate, health, local authorities, etc.

Generally, suppliers-editors are specialised in one category of software package.

To begin with, the present charter is more specifically interested in the family of application software packages. Most of these packages – which are intended for a large number of customers – can be configured according to the needs of each customer.

There are also software packages which implement processes characteristic of specific markets (such as vertical markets) and which are less customisable. They make up for this by emphasizing the fact that they implement good management practices within a specific area, such as accounting.

It is therefore up to the customer to examine the packages in order to find the best balance between needs and solution and to define the specific adaptation needs.

1.2. Client and supplier roles

In this context the client needs to define both the functional and technical needs in a precise manner. The client must ask for presentations and demonstrations of the software package. As for the editor, it must provide comprehensive information on the detailed functionalities and characteristics of the software package and be informed of the client specifications.

Both parties can then measure the balance between the needs and the solution and highlight any differences.

Both the client and the supplier must check that they have the resources needed to deploy and maintain the software package and to support its proper use.

1.3. Editor's economic approach

Given the range of software packages on the market, the potential for adapting them – often based on a marketing approach guided by the analysis of client requests – differs according to each editor's own offer.

The advantages of this are that it allows a truly industrial approach (based notably on volume) which is specific to all product-type approaches.

Editors' decisions to market – or to withdraw from the market – a particular software package therefore depend on the expected or acknowledged success of the package on the market.

1.4. Client's economic approach

The deployment of a software package represents a large investment for a company which can only be amortised over a period of several years. Furthermore, the cost of reversibility is often high (such as for ERP). The client must have a guarantee as to the continuity of the solution and the development and maintenance of the software package for a guaranteed period of time.

1.5. Intellectual property

Software packages are governed by copyright, which aims to protect the creation of the originator (either a legal entity or a person) in order to allow them to exploit it in line with their strategy and to identify them as the originator of the software package.

1.6. Maintenance

There are two types of maintenance:

- Corrective maintenance, which is intended to correct bugs and malfunctions in the software package.
- Upgrade maintenance, which aims to integrate into the software package new functionalities, either due to client requests or to new legal constraints.

Maintenance is part of the editors' economic and commercial model. The client must be aware of the supplier's commitments in this area.

1.7. Interdependence of editors

A software package is built to be used in a complex hardware and software environment which is generally not designed by the editor. This environment creates an interaction between the different components and an interdependence of the players. As a result, the large majority of them make progress together. This interdependence has consequences both for the editor – as regards the development of the software – and for the client, as regards the operational implementation. Indeed, it can cause them to reconsider the existing solutions, since the latter interact with one or more elements of the information system.

2. Approach / proposals

Cigref and Syntec informatique wish to work jointly in order to establish the advice, recommendations and other proposals contained in this document, with a pragmatic view to identifying areas of progress which

may benefit their respective members. This means fixing indicators which will allow not only the instant assessment of software offers and associated services but also the regular monitoring of their upgrades and improvements.

2.1. Software packages

2.1.1. Developments

In order to clarify their strategic choices clients need a clear view of the changes editors intend to make to their software packages, whether it be the provision of upgrades or the end of the commercialisation of current versions.

With this aim in mind editors should – as far as is possible – provide their clients with a "road map" which corresponds to the changes envisaged, with as much detail as possible on the schedule of the intended changes and the contractual consequences for the client.

2.1.2. Integrator-editor links

Software editors undertake – as far as is possible – to provide prospective clients with references on the projects realised with different integrator partners in the same area of application as the prospective client in question. These references will be given only when the companies concerned have given their consent.

Should this be the case, the software editors can, if need be, provide details of the criteria according to which their partners are certified.

2.1.3. User clubs

Editors can make known the names and addresses of different recognised user clubs.

2.1.4. Clarity of licence prices

Software editors and their distributors undertake to make as clear as possible their different licence programmes, their prices and the changes expected to be made to them in time.

2.1.5. Software package quality certification

As far as the professional bodies are aware there is currently no independent and globally recognised certification as far as software packages go. Similarly, there are no associated criteria which allow – independently of any body – an objective and shared level of quality to be identified.

Syntec informatique and Cigref are keen to have such a software quality certification body at their disposal in order to be able to consult it. In the meantime a common workgroup could launch a system of reference for quality criteria.

2.1.6. Minimum life cycle of a software package

The life cycle of a software package is of course linked to its success on the market. Nevertheless, client companies should have a commitment from the editor regarding both the minimum life cycle of a software package from the date it is sold and the length of the period of support once it has been announced that the software package will cease to be sold.

During its life cycle a software package is the subject of successive upgrades. It is essential to define clear principles regarding the management of these versions (number and frequency, length of support period...).

2.2. Maintenance

2.2.1. Maintenance services

According to each editor's commercial models and strategic choices it may propose to its clients different levels of maintenance services for the software packages it commercialises: support, corrective maintenance, upgrade maintenance, interventions within execution deadlines....

It would be advisable for editors to be specific about the levels of maintenance proposed, as well as the conditions, which depend on the specific nature of the incidents which might occur.

2.2.2. Clarity of prices

As with software package licences, maintenance contracts must be as clear as possible regarding prices and conditions, and must provide the explanations needed in order to describe clearly the services provided for clients.

2.2.3. Change of versions, impact on the existing system

In the event of the arrival of new versions of a software package, there are two possibilities:

- The provision of these new versions is included in the maintenance contract (upgrade maintenance),
- Only the support and corrective maintenance are guaranteed for the software package in question, and the new version is not included.

The maintenance contract must detail the conditions applied in each of these cases.

2.2.4. Billing

The members of Cigref would like Syntec informatique to ensure that its members work on the clarity of the relationship between, on the one hand, the terms of billing and payment for the maintenance and, on the other hand, the exploitation of the software package

2.2.5. Client-editor relationships

In the interests of collaboration a regular meeting between the representatives of Cigref and those of Syntec informatique should allow the balance between client companies' needs and editors' maintenance offers. These meetings will facilitate the clarity cited above as regards maintenance. In order to measure this balance, dashboards and other indicators could be set up, which would evolve with time.

2.3. Projects

2.3.1. Concordance with needs

When a solution (hardware, licence, service) is purchased the software package is chosen with the aim of meeting a specific need. Generally it is integrated into a project approach, the aim of which is to arrive at the realisation of a solution which is based on one or more software packages, but which is also made up of additional hardware, software and services. The realisation of the whole project is generally the responsibility of system integrators.

2.3.2. Expertise for clients or for integrators

Editors undertake to define their own strategy with regard to the provision of technology experts to clients or integrators. If editors also have a system integration

activity, then it will be necessary to consult the "Engineering and System Integration" charter.

2.3.3. Performance and means commitment

Service proposals on the part of editors will systematically give rise to a specific commitment regarding performance and / or means, depending on the service. Editors undertake to make things as clear as possible, as soon as the proposal is drafted.

2.4. Contractual aspects

2.4.1. Counterfeit warranty

All the parties concerned by contractual relationships (whether within the framework of a project or not) undertake to respect the copyright of the software packages, thus protecting the editors and their clients from the risks of counterfeiting. For their part, editors will safeguard their clients against lawsuits that may be brought against their software packages.

2.4.2. Licence transfer

Editors undertake to make the conditions for transferring the user rights of their software package licences as clear as possible, in particular in the event of a change of scope or the outsourcing of IT services.

2.4.3. Counting rules

The rules for counting the software package licences concerned must be specified as clearly as possible when the sales contract is drawn up. Any changes in these rules must be communicated in sufficient time to allow the client companies to measure the potential impact and to act accordingly.

Clients undertake to collaborate with the editor in applying these counting rules.

2.5. Commercial relations

2.5.1. Editor organisation

Since there are a wide variety of editors present on the market they must – on clients' request – specify their origins and provide all relevant information concerning their operational and technical organisation.

2.5.2. Clarity of client references for software packages

Editors – with the approval of their customers – undertake to provide their prospective clients with the references of companies using their software packages, as well as the conditions in which the latter are being used. As far as possible, the contact details of a correspondent within these companies will be provided..

2.5.3. Structuring of the pre-sales approach: software package, mock-up, ...

Editors can help their clients by providing them with all the useful information or the methodologies conducive to an assessment of how well the software package meets their needs. In particular these methodologies should describe the different technology presentation steps by combining them – if necessary – with the realisation of mock-ups or technical or functional test procedures. These methodologies may be adapted according to the approaches proposed by the other players, in particular the system integrators.

2.5.4. Clarity of strategy

Software editors undertake to provide – at the request of their clients – information on their strategy regarding technological development. This information must remain confidential and for the use of the client companies only. However, given the constant evolution in technologies and the respective positioning of the different IT players, this information may change without advance warning.

2.5.5. Reciprocal good faith

Software editors and their clients undertake to ensure that the needs expressed and the proposed solutions remain balanced beyond the signature of the contract and until the contract ends. If there is a significant change, the parties undertake to inform each other of it.

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CIGREF
E-mail: cigref@cigref.fr
http://www.cigref.fr

Syntec informatique
E-mail: contact@syntec-informatique.fr
http://www.syntec-informatique.fr