

Microsoft Japan

Contracts to operate a Shared
Service Center. Support for internal
DX beyond BPO.



Call for change

Accenture's Operations consulting division operates Business Support Center (hereinafter referred to as "BSC") at Microsoft Japan Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "Microsoft Japan") and helps enabling Microsoft Japan's employees to focus on higher value added work.

BSC is characterized by the fact that it provides more than 1,000 various types of services on outsourced basis with respect to sales, marketing, reporting, and other operations, in addition to general affairs. BSC also manages some of its operations in Dalian, China.

BSC was launched in 2012, shortly after Microsoft Japan moved its headquarters functions to Shinagawa. Initially, BSC started its services as a support desk that was entrusted with only general affairs operations. Yoichiro Tanaka, Business program manager, Corporate strategy & planning at Microsoft Japan, who has been involved in this

project, explained that the background to outsource their work to Accenture was the bloating of existing operations and a complicated internal structure, and they made it difficult to grasp and organize the company's operations from their own objective perspective. Therefore, they needed support of the third party.

Why did Microsoft Japan choose Accenture? Mr. Tanaka reflects as follows.

" One of the reasons we chose Accenture was because they already had a track record of outsourcing work with us in other areas. Another reason was their knowledge of Microsoft products with their technology capability. And the biggest deciding factor was that they organized not only our general operations, but also proposed a roadmap that would take us several years into the future."





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In fact, several years after BSC's services launched, Accenture again conducted due diligence in response to a situation where operations had once again become bloated. From this timing, BSC was transformed into a structure that provides more than 1,000 different services, including marketing and reporting, in addition to its existing general affairs operations.

At this time, Mina Kobayashi, Managing Director of Accenture Operations, was in charge of conducting due diligence on more than 1,000 types of operations. There were no shortcuts to the enormous volume of work, so Kobayashi carefully organized the operations one by one, and made proposals with an eye toward the future of Microsoft Japan's operations with "To Be" image.

Although improving operations was certainly one of the most important missions, Masaki Honda, Executive Officer, Area transformation lead, Microsoft Japan, says that the purpose of this project was not limited to simply improving operational efficiency.

" What was even more important to us than improving operational efficiency was to go back to our customer's perspective. By outsourcing operations, we had to rethink what our own operations were for, and unless we could be more attentive to our customers than before, standardization would be meaningless,"

says Mr. Honda.

When tech meets human ingenuity



Initially, BSC received requests from more than 700 Microsoft Japan's employees via e-mail, but it was not simple to identify the targeted work from the requested e-mails and many deficiencies in the requests needed fairly long time assigning a person in charge to the job. In addition, the process to consolidate the ledgers filled out by each staff made it difficult to grasp the real-time status of the work...

Therefore, Accenture considered installation of a ticket management tool. As a result of discussions with Microsoft Japan, Microsoft Power Apps, a low-code

application creation tool for the Microsoft Power Platform, which was already being used in the company's operations, was introduced and a ticket management tool that complied with Microsoft Japan's policies was built.

According to Accenture's developer, the development of Power Apps itself was not difficult and could be developed in a short period of time, even if the configuration was versatile enough to handle more than 1,000 various operations, such in this case.

When tech meets human ingenuity

In addition, when expanding BSC's offerings and transferring some operations to Dalian, there were concerns within Microsoft Japan. Accenture closely worked with Mr. Tanaka to eliminate the concerns of Microsoft Japan's employees by designing business processes while taking care to prevent the occurrence of the expected problems.

According to Mr. Honda, the partial transfer of operations to Dalian was also a great opportunity for Microsoft Japan to change their mindset.

“ We needed to trust Accenture and change our own mindset. Hitoshi Yoshida, the President of our company, has always said, "Transform Japan, Transform Ourselves, Transform Together. As these words express, it is important for us to transform ourselves as well,” said Mr. Honda.

A valuable difference

In 2020, new coronavirus pandemic has began, and Microsoft Japan switched to remote work in March of that year. Part of the background of successful quick transition to remote work was Accenture's continuing work to improve business processes along with the transfer of some operations to Dalian.

In conjunction with Microsoft Japan's transition to remote work, Accenture also made actions to coordinate BSC's remote support. Since the center in Dalian had already implemented remote environment, with its achievements and knowledge, Accenture proposed a system which could minimize the needs to work in the office.

Although the situation was imminent at the time, Microsoft Japan did not voice any major concerns. Accenture's continued efforts to reduce paper documents and stamps also proved to be very effective in the unexpected situation.

Accenture's continued efforts to improve business processes along with the expansion of BSC's services increased Microsoft Japan's efficiency such as shorter lead times and fewer inquiries. Furthermore, employees are now able to face more value-added tasks than ever before. However, there is no end in sight for this project, says Mr. Tanaka.

" The business situation is constantly changing and the effort of efficiency improvements will not end. What we have been working on with Accenture is not just BPO, but digital transformation (DX), which means constant changing and no ending in sight. This transformation is nothing special, and BSC's model can be applied to other companies as well and spreading this model to many companies will lead to DX for Japan itself."

YOICHIRO TANAKA,

Business program manager, Business support center, Corporate strategy and planning, Microsoft Japan Co., Ltd.

A valuable difference

Regarding the significance of transformations and the value provided by Accenture, Mr. Honda states as follows.

“ Transformation is a wide range of muddy details. Accenture's steady efforts over the years, starting with organizing more than 1,000 types of operations, building ticket management tools, and proposing continuous improvements, have brought us to where we are today. Transformation requires a strong commitment of top management, and above all, the presence of a partner who will seriously support us. For Microsoft Japan, the partnership with Accenture is truly an asset.”

DX at Microsoft Japan and evolution of BSC is never ending, and Accenture will continue to support for achieving a better customer experience by not only further improving the efficiency of existing services, but also by utilizing data to enhance business operations.

Benefit

Provides more than
1,000
various services

220
kinds of business
improvements

5
staff five times, from
approximately 20 to 100.



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