

Case Study

GORD Systems, implementation of IT Mark

Skopje, May 2007

1. DESCRIPTION OF THE NEED

GORD Systems is an independent software developer focused on eBusiness solutions for the Healthcare, Public sector and SME's. The company, established in 1989, is a leading IT solution provider in Macedonia. Employees are experienced IT specialists and consultants with deep understanding of the business processes in our main industry sectors.

Our software solutions and Services aim to help organizations to improve and automate the key business processes, giving them the freedom to implement full control over their businesses, and focus on business development.

Our mission is to deliver best quality software solutions and IT services that will meet our customer's needs and international standards.

The vision of GORD Systems is that our brand name to become worldwide recognized as a seal of quality, product usability and business success.

Company's major advantage is based on the company's long term expertise in development and implementation of IT solutions and the knowledge of the business processes in certain industry sectors, primarily the Healthcare, Government and SME sector.

The company has international project experience in UK, Serbia, Bulgaria, Denmark, and USA. We have also our own developed solutions for the Healthcare sector, few of which are built for export markets (EU, USA).

GORD Systems business development strategy is based on export of products and services on the EU and USA markets. In order to implement this strategy, the company realized that some of the worldwide recognized standards for quality assurance and software process improvement must be implemented.

In August 2006, GORD Systems successfully completed the IT Mark certification, which is based on CMMI and ISO17799 / ISO27001 standards.

2. SOLUTION

Our goals are to conform to the CMMI Level 3 and ISO 27001 (17799) standards in the next 18-24 months. Having already the IT Mark certificate, we have covered a great part of CMMI Level 2 and ISO 27001.

Currently we are working hard to complete all CMMI Level 2 Process Areas, and starting to work on several Process Areas from CMMI Level 3 that are closely linked to the Process Areas from Level 2, such as IPM (Integrated Project Management), RSKM (Risk Management), Requirement Development (RD), etc.

At the very beginning, and having in mind the resources needed for the implementation, we realized that with a classical Document Management System we cannot achieve our goals – planned time frame for implementation as well as the usability and on time delivery of the reports required by the management team.

That's why we decided to develop our own web based software solution to cover most of the Process Areas. Currently our software solution covers the following process areas:

- Project Planning (PP)
- Project Monitoring & Control (PMC)
- Configuration Management (CM)
- Measurement & Analysis (MA) - partially
- Risk Management (RSKM) – partially
- Integrated Project Management (IPM) – partially
- Requirement Development (RD) –partially

3. RESULTS

Even though prior to the IT Mark initiative, we already had implemented Methodology for Software Development, as well as many Internal Procedures covering most of our processes, we still had a lot to improve to comply with the IT Mark Certification.

Most of our efforts were focused on improving our Project Management and Support processes. Since we are a software development company, we decided to develop our own software to cover our internal processes as defined by CMMI.

Initially, we implemented the software solution to cover only the Project Planning and Project Monitoring & Control processes. When we started using it, we concluded that we can easily extend the functionality to cover the key aspects of the Measurement & Analysis process. So we added several functionalities to our Time Sheets module to allow for reporting on many different metrics. Most recently we integrated an important part of the Requirements Management process, as well as the Configuration Management process. The solution has still to offer us many more benefits, but we are already seeing great results of its implementation.

The most visible result we have seen is having real-time reporting on what is really happening within our company. Our managers have online access to all of their projects, and can instantly see which tasks are on time, which are lagging behind schedule so they can push the team or add more resources to the team to get the task done on time. All of the communication and documentations is also covered by our electronic Document Management & Collaboration System.

The solution also saves us a lot of time, so for instance, some of the reports that we have done regularly in the past such as the report on availability of the Human Resources in a given time period used to take hours if not days to complete, and now we have it instantly at any given time. We can also make simulations of different scenarios for uncertain future projects, so that we can better prepare ourselves in case we get more projects than we can manage at once. I would also add that now we have reports that were previously unimaginable to produce, such as measurement of the Accuracy of Estimation for a given project, time period, and/or employee.

4. LESSONS LEARNED

What the SPI Initiative has taught us, is that just as with any other important change inside a company, the management commitment is the key element to institutionalizing the new ways of working.

We also learned that every employee must understand the real reasons for the changes being implemented, so that they would not take the extra effort as a personal effort that is meaningless. Every employee has to realize that the actions they must take for the new improved way of working, at first seem difficult and consume a lot of their precious time, but when regularly practiced they become a routine, and finally yield great results and justify the excessive energy that was initially invested.

In our case, the SPI initiative for obtaining IT Mark was probably more expensive due to the fact that we invested in developing our own software solution. On the other hand though, it turned out that this helped our employees identify themselves with the SPI initiative, because most of them had an impact on the solution and could immediately understand why all of the extra administrative work was being done, especially when developing the Reporting modules.

So far, the IT Mark implementation in our company was a real success, but we are still at the beginning of the implementation of CMMI Level 3 and we have a lot of work and new

investments ahead of us. The good thing is that we know that it is worth it, and we are ready to take the next steps.

The impact on the business development of our company, especially the marketing add-on value is very important.

The IT Mark standard helped us to implement the quality assurance and the management of the business processes as a company standard.

As the standard is based on CMMI processes, our company is starting to be recognized on the market as a vendor that complies with the highest standards for software development and implementation.

This helps us to talk to more serious clients and certainly about more profitable projects for our company.

The USA and EU clients are very well informed about CMMI standard. During the last CeBIT fair in Hannover where we exhibited offering our products and services, more than 25% of the clients we established contact with asked for if we have implemented CMMI or similar standard. Also, just recently, our company has been included in the consortium of 10 partners from 8 countries that is going to submit a 3 Mil Euro FP7 project proposal. The implemented IT Mark standard was important advantage in the selection of our company to join the project consortium.

It is obvious that with the implementation of CMMI level 3, the visibility of our company on the market will be much better and our negotiation position even stronger.
