



Impressions and Management-Summary

by Marina Hein

"How Controllers support cross-departmental decisions in terms of strategic company goals"

1. Speakers at the expert group meeting on January 28th, 2022, at a glance:

Alexander Hein, Expert group leader and CEO smartPM.solutions

Christian Bramkamp, deputy ICV DCC expert group leader & Global Delivery Project Manager at Roboyo

Arbi Araks, Head of Controlling & Finance at List GC

Ronald Morawetz, Head of Engineering and QM at List GC

2. Content of the ICV Digital Controlling Competence expert group meeting on January 28th, 2022 ‘How do you digitize your performance management processes?’

2.1 Focus on Project-Portfolio Performance Management: ‘...we run 300 projects in parallel...’

No matter whether you earn money with projects or spend money on them: Project-Portfolio Performance Management is helpful and necessary in both cases. At our third event for performance management experts from the Digital Controlling expert group in the 3D space, **Project-Portfolio (Program-) Performance Management was the focus.**

Christian Bramkamp gives deep insights into his daily challenges as Global Delivery Project Manager at Roboyo. Christian shows the major challenges in this area with more than 300 project running at the same time und presents a project performance management tool with a traffic light system that was discussed thoroughly. The future vision of the deputy expert group leader DCC is the replacement of Excel with a professional performance management tool. More infos are exclusively for DCC expert group members in the video.



Figure 1: Christian shows the challenges of the project-portfolio management using Roboyo as an example – and presents the currently used traffic light system for project-portfolio performance management.

2.2 *‘We reached our limits with Excel. With our new integrated performance management tool, we not only save time, but also approx. EUR 450k per project/year ...’*

Due to strong company growth, the project-driven List GC faced severe technical limitations with **Excel as their performance management tool**. Checking formulas wasn't just a burden for their team - **Management was also annoyed due to data inconsistency**.

Consequently, a new integrated financial planning incl. project-portfolio performance management tool was implemented in just 3 months. Arbi Araks, Head of Controlling & Finance, and Ronald Morawetz, Head of Engineering & QM, both List GC, did not only show what lessons have been learned, but also that **it takes management determination and persuasiveness to push through innovations**. The new integrated system not only improved data transparency – LIST GC's team now enjoy their project related work since they are now performing value-adding activities and taking responsibility for their data.

Now the whole company thinks in scenarios – this emerges as the most important change in the company. **The result: fast, reliable decision-making and agile action**. From the project creation to the link with P&L, balance sheet and cash flow they present their processes in the newly purchased performance management tool and give the members of the expert group an idea of how new technologies could support the various performance management roles. In addition, Arbi Araks and Ronald Morawetz show more about the process of selecting the performance management solution. Details can be seen in the video exclusively for DCC expert group members.



Figure 2: Arbi Araks and Ronald Morawetz, both List GC, show their Digital Controlling Competence directly in the performance management system – from project initiation to impact analysis on P&L, balance sheet & cash flow

2.3 Implement an integrated planning tool at the same time as the ERP system modernization? Yes, why not.

The journey is the destination. Seamlessly linked processes and agile company management are desirable for everyone, but many participants in the expert group meeting see themselves only on the way there and this optimum for their own company is still a long way off. ‘First you need perfect data – only then you can work on networked planning.’

‘That’s not true,’ says Alexander Hein, ‘because there will never be perfect data.’ **An ERP system can certainly be introduced at the same time as an integrated planning solution.** And that is often how it is done in practice. Processes are improved at the same time. **‘Always having doubts does not lead to the goal. You have to trust yourself and dare to take the first step’**, is ultimately the conclusion of many participants. Artificial Intelligence, which is already integrated in many planning solutions, can also be used to counter ‘poor’ data quality.



Figure 3: Alexander Hein shows an example for integrated performance management: Procurement Performance Management, S&OP, Supply Chain Mgmt. & financial planning connected for optimal control of all business processes

When presenting practical examples of networked planning in the often neglected purchasing area, the expert group leader shows the connection of purchasing, S&OP/supply chain management and financial planning in different performance management tools (Unit4 FP&A, Jedox and MS Power BI) and receives the participants’ feedback: ‘impressively elegant and promising’. He gives an overview of the optimized capacity planning with deviation analysis, the savings tracker, multidimensional expenditure analyzes and the link to production planning. You can see more about this in the video exclusively for DCC expert group members.

2.4 The discussion – Is Excel a suitable performance management tool or not?

When networking in the summery 3D garden, the ‘learning from others’ concept of the **ICV Digital Controlling Competence** was lived intensively (see Fig. 4). There were exciting discussions on the subject of ‘Performance management with Excel’ – Excel supporters opposed Excel opponents. They agreed on only one point:

Controller should only use Excel for ‘creative’ trying out new solutions and not as a basis for planning/decisions. When purchasing a professional performance management tool ‘it can get emotional in companies’. The recommendation: everyone must be brought on board and that requires, above all, the persuasiveness of the management.

‘Excel should be banned, especially for forecasts and as a basis for action because formular errors make it impossible to trust data’ was the view of those who already use performance management tools. “Excel allows a lot of freedom” countered the Excel supporters. In any case, the relief of employees and motivation through value-adding activities increases through the introduction of digital performance management tools. **One can certainly agree that Excel can, should and will be used ‘on the side for trying things out’. As a planning, forecasting, budgeting and analysis tool it definitely doesn’t convince (if you know the alternatives).**



Figure 4: Discussion to the topic Excel as a performance management tool and the emotionality when purchasing integrated performance management systems

2.5 The conclusion

1) Performance management does not only take place in the controlling department and

2) Digitization and automatization of an integrated performance management system brings a lot of added value

Also interesting was the view that **future generations of controllers and project managers will pay more attention to their work-life balance and preparing for these new demands by modernizing/digitalizing the planning, analysis, budgeting and reporting system is a MUST.** The increasing number of roles of the controller (data scientist, decision scientist, change agent etc. – see expert meeting lecture by Utz Schäffer on the knowledge platform) are countered by the increasing desire for work flexibility, relief, and work-life balance. A workload of 60-80 hours/week will not be the future. **Only modern technologies that automate many steps and take over complex processes can compensate for this gap.** In an integrated system, responsibility is spread, and employees show more commitment. The task of management is ‘only’ to monitor, which leaves more time for value-adding activities.

The presentations all showed where digitization and automatization can help in performance management and which complex processes, they simplify in order to enable comprehensive corporate management. Arbi Araks, Head of Controlling and Finance at List GC sums up the event: **‘Performance management doesn’t just take place in the controlling department – control takes place throughout the company.’ All processes along the company’s value chain must be optimized. When choosing a performance management tool, you need a provider that covers both performance and project management. The connecting element from calculation to financial planning must be mapped.** This was only the case for one of the 15 software providers in the List GC selection process.

One participant got straight to the point that the selection of an integrated corporate management system, whether in the S&OP area, in project performance management or in sales performance management, is not easy. When it comes to this, ‘it always gets emotional in our company’.

3. Thanks to all participants for their input – that’s what makes the expert group come alive!

Our goal? Bringing controllers closer to digital technologies in order to relieve them and free them for value-adding tasks. With more than 40 registrations (excluding organizers and support team), interest in the expert group event was very high. That makes us happy! [Registration for the next event on May 10th, 2-6 p.m. is just starting.](#) This time we don’t see each other in the 3D world, but on site in the Hotel Westin Grand Munich, Marriott right after the Congress of Controller.

All videos, presentations and reports on the expert group events are exclusively accessible to members of the expert group after registration and admission to the expert group on the Digital Controlling Competence knowledge platform. After each event, a link will be sent to the members of the expert group and participants in the ICV DCC event.

More information about the expert group and registration is [available on the ICV website.](#)

Thanks to the active participants for their commitment to the expert group event!

Your Alexander Hein, expert group leader

Christian Bramkamp, expert group head deputy

& the whole expert group team