

Chapter 20: Migration and Knowledge Transfer

The handover from an existing internal team to the Service Provider needs to be as flawless as possible and complete within a defined timeframe. Internal clients or external customers will not forgive mistakes attributed to the outsourcing programme so the migration and knowledge transfer is a process that can make or break the entire programme. It therefore needs careful advance planning.

Planning the transition itself is a major operation that requires senior management support. The programme manager needs to focus on several key issues:

- How will the organisation and processes adapt?
- Who will stay and transition to the outsourcing vendor and who will leave?
- What are the conditions and benefits for those who are staying and those who are leaving?
- What to do about employee resistance?
- What is the transition timetable?

One of the most important processes not mentioned is the process of knowledge transfer. Knowledge transfer is required mainly where valuable employees are going to exit the organisation and be replaced by new people without experience of the job function.

In the case of transition, the requirement for knowledge transfer is avoided, because the same people join the outsourcing vendor. When outsourcing a function to India, it is unlikely that any of your existing team is going to be a part of the future equation. You need to think about how to get their knowledge and skills to the people in India.

This chapter focuses on the steps required for planning a managed migration to India and the issues associated with the knowledge transfer process.

Offshore Transition

I want to first look at the steps needed for successful project migration to India. I asked Meena Ganesh, former COO Contact Centre Business of ICICIoneSource, to help me and she responded by providing a wealth of information.¹ Ganesh is now the India CEO of British retailer Tesco, however this section outlines how I-oneSource has successfully transitioned several clients to the offshore model.

At a speech to NASSCOM delegates in London, Steve Dunning, the Managing Director of BPO firm WNS (UK) said: "Go beyond the obvious and acquire a vision. Look at firms like GE who have moved 15,000 people for inspiration, rather than planning a 30 seat pilot."²

Dunning has a strong point. India works well for many major companies, but there is a major difference between the migration of a small pilot project and an entire business function. It is essential to break down the entire migration into ever smaller stages so both the client and outsourcing supplier can create a strong sense of control and purpose.

I-OneSource breaks down the transition process into a number of defined stages. These can be described as:

1. Understand and arrive at the order in which the processes should be migrated (Feasibility Analysis).
2. Develop a project plan for each phase.
3. Measure deliverables and timelines through a progress report.
4. Review overall project performance through a post migration review.

Feasibility Analysis

The feasibility analysis is designed to look at the current process and to plan how it might work using the offshore model. When studying each process, the opinion of the reviewer will fall in to one of three broad groups, based on how difficult the process might be to outsource offshore. Although the reviewer will apply some detailed analysis to the feasibility study, the end result is the determination of whether each process is easy, fair or difficult to move offshore.

I-OneSource uses a detailed list of areas and issues that should be studied for every process that is proposed to move offshore. These include the following:

Issue	Possibilities
Process Complexity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Least Complex - primarily auto reconciliation and less manual intervention • More Complex - manual reconciliations, no alternative investments / international securities, no specific client requirements • Most Complex - manual reconciliations, alternative investments, / international securities, governed by client requirements
Hand-offs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or no handoffs involved in the process • Two to three hand-offs involved in the process • More than three hand-offs involved in the process