

A Company with a Purpose

Matsushita Electric Housewares Manufacturing Works was founded in Japan in March of 1918. Its founder, Konosuke Matsushita, was a 23-year-old entrepreneur who felt that electricity was on the brink of transforming the world. The young man was right, and his company quickly grew, building a solid reputation of high-quality products at affordable prices.

In the mid-1920s, the company established the "National" brand to market a wide variety of its products. In the '60s, it created the "Technics" line for its high-end audio speakers. Its most recognizable name, though, dates back to the '50s, when it exported some speakers under the name "PanaSonic."

Today, Panasonic Corporation is made up of 496 consolidated companies and over 257,000 employees. Its slogan, "A Better Life, A Better World," reminds employees of Matsushita's goal of enhancing the lives of everyday people. As the company nears its 100th birthday in 2018, its products look to optimize the daily experience, both at home and at work.

Facing Threats from Every Angle

Panasonic Corporation of North America houses the company's Innovation Center of North America (ICNA), a division that conceives and develops the brand's latest and greatest offerings. ICNA creates an ecosystem of technologies and services that complement key hardware offerings - delivering complete and inventive solutions. It serves the automotive, avionic, energy, hospitality, and retail industries, just to name a few. ICNA aims to live up to Matsushita's objective by making Panasonic the preferred technological partner of government agencies, businesses, and consumers.

With so many offerings, ICNA is a division that is hard to define, and therefore, it faces unique challenges from several different fronts. Its primary focus is on electronics, which entails sales, research and development (R&D), and manufacturing activities.



ICNA's five greatest challenges are:

1. THE COMPETITION HAS DEEP POCKETS

Sometimes called the "Big Five," Google, Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Microsoft are actively diversifying and expanding. These well-funded enterprises attract the best talent and reinvest heavily in R&D.

2. CONSUMERS HAVE EVER-CHANGING DEMANDS

Trends must be monitored and anticipated. One of the latest – and possibly the one with the most potential – is the Internet of Things (IoT). It makes custom-tailored living a reality, but it also brings a myriad of cybersecurity concerns into play.

3. COSTS CAN EASILY NEGATE REVENUES

R&D is expensive, especially when working on cognitive technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, and natural language processing. To control these new costs and assist the company in areas outside of its traditional expertise, strategic partnerships must be made.

4. DISRUPTORS LURK BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Today's marketplace requires competitive advantages and true agility just to stay afloat. If you cannot disrupt the market like a small start-up, even the largest enterprises can become obsolete.

5. KEEPING AN EYE ON THE MISSION IS CRUCIAL

Success only comes if goals are achieved in line with the mission. In line with Matsushita's goal, ICNA must produce green, energy-efficient technologies – delivering a lifestyle that benefits both people and the planet.

INFLEXIBLE SYSTEMS STYMIE GROWTH

As Panasonic Corporation sets the tone for the company's Centenary, ICNA has been tasked with leading the way with cutting-edge solutions and products. In 2016, ICNA was ready to push technological boundaries more than ever before.

The department soon realized that projects could only be expanded if they could also be managed - and when it came to administration and oversight, they had a major problem. As part of a high-tech company, ICNA was utilizing an on-premises project management (PM) tool that it had developed in-house. Although the application worked well in the past, it couldn't handle the requirements needed for rapid growth and expansion.

Additionally, the Project Management Office (PMO) needed to be able to integrate processes with SharePoint, where it houses new ideas and concepts. Without this functionality, PM data would be incomplete - if not useless.

The PMO needed a solution that:

- **ALLOWED UNLIMITED SCALABILITY**
- **FACILITATED SHAREPOINT INTEGRATION**
- **DEFINED WORKFLOWS**
- **SUPPORTED COLLABORATION**

PROJILITY PRESENTS EXPERT SOLUTIONS

In August 2016, ICNA strategically partnered with Projility, a PM services leader and product innovator. Projility implemented Microsoft's powerful Project Portfolio Management (PPM) tool, Project Online, throughout the

PMO. Then, the PM partner added its dynamic tool, Hammerhead BI, to the solution. Hammerhead BI fully integrates with Microsoft Power BI to offer users a pre-defined data model, pre-configured dashboards, and an extensible data warehouse. It works within Microsoft Power BI so that users can utilize Office 365 applications, and it supports customization to meet the specific needs of every PMO.

To ensure that ICNA can deliver on its promises, Projility's Hammerhead solution enables the PMO to:

Predict

With easy-to-navigate, role-based dashboards, visibility is enhanced across the entire portfolio. "What-if" scenarios can be visualized, and trends become conspicuous with customized reports and up-to-date metrics. And to manage potential in-house disruptors, SharePoint is fully integrated into the system so that an idea is never overlooked.

Adapt

When consumer demands change or a competitor alters the market, project prioritization can be adjusted thanks to Hammerhead's proprietary ranking algorithm. Dashboards highlighting project health and progress ensure that small problems never turn into full-blown bottlenecks. Enhanced reporting gives decision makers the data they need to stay on time and on budget - which helps the company control costs and increase profits.

Respond

No matter what direction the portfolio needs to go, Project Online and Hammerhead BI offer unlimited scalability. Projility's team of PM experts reverse-engineered the PMO's workflow process, defining and streamlining it for maximum productivity. With an agile solution in place, the PMO can behave like a nimble start-up - but with all the power of a large conglomerate.

SEIZING THE FUTURE

Robert Gerald, Deputy Director of Program Planning and Business Management at ICNA, says that Projility brought governance to the PMO. "We relied on their expertise to get us through the process. There were hitches along the way [thanks to ICNA's security safeguards], but the team understood our needs and addressed every issue."

With Project Online and Hammerhead BI in place, ICNA has the robust PPM tool it needs to pursue Konosuke Matsushita's heartfelt goal. The PMO has changed its mindset from "if" to "when" - and it knows that it has a PPM partner in Projility that can address any need. With such a foundation, anything can be accomplished.

When asked what the PMO has planned for the future, Gerald says with a smile that "it all depends on the portfolio - and where we need to go."

"Today, in North America, our Smart City and enterprise solutions in Energy, Mobility, Connectivity and Imaging are helping to transform public spaces and communities with technologies that predict, adapt and respond to peoples' needs."

Tom Gebhard

Chairman and CEO, Panasonic Corporation of North America