



Use case

This case study outlines a specific project assignment that Follon & Partners carried out for a client. We documented the story and included quotes from Eric (ICT Manager) and Martine (CIO), our clients.

The client is a global player, generating €10 billion in annual revenue and operating from the Netherlands. A well-functioning, stable, and secure ICT infrastructure, along with adequate information provision, is crucial for their core business processes and customers. The ICT operations were largely outsourced to a single provider, who delivered both ICT infrastructure services and application management and development.

The Situation Before Our Collaboration

Significant Challenges and High Risk of Failure

The agreement with the ICT provider held substantial contract value and was critical to the client's business continuity. This contract was about to expire and needed to be renewed. Eric noted, "It was truly a challenging process with significant financial stakes... If our operations halt for even a day, the impact is massive, not just for us but for trade across all of Europe."

Lack of Flexibility and Scalability

The existing contract lacked necessary flexibility and scalability. Previous attempts to amend this were unsuccessful. Eric stated, "We wanted a more flexible contract with significantly more termination options and scalability."

A Complex Landscape with Strained Relationships

There were many stakeholders, multiple areas of concern, and conflicting interests. Eric said, "There were many new players, both on the supplier's side and ours... and trust between the supplier and us, the client, was severely strained."

What We Achieved

A Flexible and Scalable Contract

Eric: "The mission was successful... we now have a more flexible contract with more termination and scalability options—not just a lower price or better financial conditions. This has laid a future-proof foundation; we are now maximally prepared for unpredictable market changes and future technological developments."

Higher Quality and Lower Costs

The new contract is clear, transparent, modular, and of much higher quality, and is optimally aligned with

the needs of internal customers. Although cost reduction was not the primary goal, this project will result in significant savings over the upcoming contract period.

Strong Relationships

Eric: "As mentioned, trust between us as the client and the supplier was under pressure initially. There were definitely moments where we had difficult phone calls on a Friday evening... but in the end, we managed to secure a much better set of conditions while maintaining the relationship." This improvement applies to both the client and the supplier.

Long-Term Continuity and Reliability Secured

Eric: "This contract is crucial in minimizing the risk of failure, both operationally and reputationally. Reliability is essential for us to ensure continuity in the coming years. Investing in today's and tomorrow's continuity is vital to guarantee this."

The Approach Taken by Follon & Partners

Customized Solution with Maximum Added Value

Eric: "The big five consulting firms focus mainly on standardization, which is not what we were looking for. Based on their experience and track record, with a small team of specialists, F&P gave me the confidence that they are not 'mass producers.'"

F&P provided this client with the advantages of working with a 'boutique consultancy': a highly customized approach, direct access to senior partners with the necessary experience and expertise, and agility and flexibility. Thanks to Follon & Partners' proven approach, the client earned back the investment in our services more than 100 times over.

Eric: "The contract, operational delivery, governance, and the business and personal relationships between decision-makers all required work. We needed someone with sourcing knowledge and experience to assist us. We also sought someone capable of navigating this challenging situation."

Process, Structure, and Mutual Interests

Arjen (Client Manager from the Supplier): "Since F&P took over, the project received an immediate new impulse. F&P quickly brought focus and structure to the process, which had previously stalled. It was crucial that sufficient attention was given to rebuilding mutual trust and that F&P made both the client's and our interests as the supplier clear and brought them together. As a result, this project was very successful for us as a supplier."

Long-Term Continuity and Reliability Secured

Eric: "As a client, I don't want to remain dependent on external consultants. The proactive approach I experienced involved proposing ideas, looking ahead, and frequently asking the question: When I'm no longer here, who will take over? F&P was already addressing who would assume their role during the process. This ensured that the transfer and safeguarding of results within the internal organization were arranged before the project was completed."

Sovereignty

"Yes-men" only confirm what you already know or think, without offering new insights. This often doesn't lead to effective solutions or improvements. Advisors who challenge you bring new perspectives and ideas, giving you a better understanding of your problems and enabling you to develop better, more innovative solutions.

Eric and Martine: “The F&P consultant could challenge us on what was and wasn’t achievable and occasionally posed that relevant extra question. His sovereignty made him strong and convincing in his approach.”

Integrity and Trust

Integrity and trust are fundamental to the quality of advice, the effectiveness of collaboration, and the reputation and long-term relationships of our consultants.

Eric: “The F&P consultant was someone you could trust, someone who is very principled, listens well, and genuinely wants to understand the client’s interests. In the complex setting of a project with high risk of failure for us and with many competing interests, you really need someone like that.”

More information

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