Joint Forces

Merging Competencies and Cultures in University IT

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Which units were merged?

**IT Centre**
- 100 employees
- Central infrastructure
- IT support for faculties (research & teaching)

**Administrative IT**
- 60 employees
- Business applications
- IT support for the university administration
What did we expect?

Benefits

• Minimisation of redundant processes and tasks
• Improved employee recruitment
• Empowerment by merging human and financial resources

Challenges

• Minimal interference with everyday business
• Merger on eye level
How did we proceed?

Pre-Merger Phase
• Analysis of the status quo
• Development of a vision

Merger Phase
• New organisational & operational structure
• New common identity

Post-Merger Phase
• Integration of cultures
Pre-Merger Phase: Vision

WWU IT Vision

• Who are we? How do we want to be perceived?
• What do we do? What are we responsible for?
• What do we want to achieve?
• How do we work?
• How are we connected? What makes us a team?

“The WWU IT is a service and competence centre for reliable, customer-oriented and sustainable IT.”
Merger Phase: Structure & Identity (1)

Organisational Structure

- Head / CIO
  - Business Office / Procurement
  - IT Security
- Management Services
- Methods & Coordination
- Service Competence Center
- Business Applications
- Application Integration
- Systems
- Communication Systems

Former Administrative IT

Former IT Centre
Merger Phase: Structure & Identity (2)

Synergies (Cross Cutting Topics)

- business office processes (especially procurement)
- client operations
- service processes
Merger Phase: Structure & Identity (3)

Employees' Expectations 2019 \( (n_{\text{IT centre}}=50, \ n_{\text{administrative IT}}=36) \)

Hopes
- Better communication & collaboration
- Better structures & work processes
- Opportunities for personal development

Concerns
- Increasing workload
- Loss of responsibilities / competencies
- Frictions due to different work cultures
- Decreasing customer satisfaction, worsened image
Post-Merger Phase: Culture (1)

For a shared organisational culture to emerge and be lived, *communication and direct contact* between employees is needed above all, ...

... but a pandemic happened.
Post-Merger Phase: Culture (2)

New Communication Formats

• Fusion café
• Open dialogue & open office hours
• Shared internal wiki and group chat

Employees' Evaluation 2020 (arithmetic means; $n_{\text{min}}=56$, $n_{\text{max}}=71$)

- Fusion café: 3.6
- Cooperation with new colleagues: 3.5
- Communication of the management: 3.3
- Opportunities for participation: 3.2

1 2 3 4 5
very poor very good
Post-Merger Phase: Culture (3)

Employees' Evaluation 2020: “There are still major cultural differences” (n=68)

The cultural gap is still evident.

Measures need to spark team spirit and reserve time and space for social and informal exchange.
Thank you!