



MEISTERPLAN



/Flughafen
München

Interview: The use of Clarity and Meisterplan at Munich Airport



Interview

In this interview, Matthias Graf from Flughafen München GmbH (FMG) provides insights into the use of Clarity and Meisterplan, as well as the integration of relevant third-party systems.

About the Interviewee

Matthias Graf

Chief Project Portfolio & Resource Management, Munich Airport



➤ **Hello Mr. Graf! Please briefly introduce and tell us a few words about yourself.**

My name is Matthias Graf, and I have been working for Flughafen München GmbH since 1998. In 2008, I started working in the IT department where my initial role was "Project Service," but today, we refer to it as PMO (Project Management Office).

At that same time (2008), Clarity was introduced with itdesign (the parent company of Meisterplan) as an implementation partner. Since then, I have been taking care of all aspects related to Clarity, including classic PMO issues such as the methodological foundation of single project management, resource management, and project portfolio management.

- **Solutions used:** Clarity, Meisterplan
- **Use Cases:** Project, portfolio and resource management
- **In use since:** 2006
- **Interfaces:** MS SharePoint, SAP PS, SAP CATS, SAP HR, SAP CO, X-Time, Cherwell, Meisterplan
- **Deployment:** Group-wide, focus on IT department

Using Meisterplan and Clarity at FMG

➤ How is Clarity used in your company?

Although Clarity has been implemented throughout the organization, it is mainly used in the IT department. We use Clarity for single project management, where the individual project manager plans their projects in Clarity including tasks, resources, and remaining effort.

We also use Meisterplan for IT resource management. Every two weeks, we hold our IT resource board meetings with Meisterplan to simulate the monthly allocation of employee roles and their workload to the projects. One level above that is portfolio management, some of which we also do in Meisterplan. The database is always Clarity.

In IT, we also use Clarity in the demand management process, in which we have an interface to our ticketing system where demand management takes place. For example, project proposals enter Clarity via the interface. They are then further enriched with information and processed there.

➤ How important is Clarity to your company?

Clarity is the central system for project, portfolio, and resource management, and over time, everyone has recognized its benefits. For project managers, there is some additional work as they have to enter more data into the system and be held accountable (unlike earlier, where they only kept track of projects mentally), but everyone is happy to have Clarity.

Introduction of Functional Resource Planning

➤ You recently introduced a resource management method. What were the reasons for this?

Between 2017 and 2019, we underwent a major reorganization in IT in which we organized ourselves based more on roles. We also began a new resource management project. After several failed attempts, we were finally successful in introducing functional resource management in IT. Today, we are pioneers in this area at FMG.

For tactical resource planning at the role level, we implemented Meisterplan while using Clarity as a database. Through this, we also introduced portfolio management in the IT department.

The main reason we took this approach was our limited employee resource capacity. That is why our focus was on the resources and not on financial issues, which people usually focus on in the context of portfolios.

➤ **Why did it work out this time with the implementation?**

As everyone knows, resource management is the primary discipline in the PPM (Project Portfolio Management) context. Our first attempt was stopped early because we realized that the quality of our project planning was insufficient. During subsequent attempts, we went into too much detail, which resulted in a complicated approach. Additionally, at that time, the underlying technology of Clarity was not up to date with current standards.

The key to success this time is that we kept everything as simple as possible and did not map every complex process, procedure, and workflow from the beginning. For example, we only focused on the role level and a monthly view—rather than getting caught up in the details.

Connection of Third-Party Systems to Clarity via Interfaces

➤ **What interfaces do you use at FMG?**

In terms of process, we have interfaces to MS SharePoint (documentation), SAP PS (structures), SAP CATS (time recording), SAP HR (organizations, departments, resources), SAP CO (finances), X-Time (time system), Cherwell (ticketing, demand management), and Meisterplan (portfolio and resource management). There are obviously many more technical interfaces because many tools are bidirectional. Growing organizations need to be up to date since the topic of interfaces is constantly evolving.

One of the biggest advantages that Clarity has is that it's extremely flexible and modular, which makes it relatively easy to integrate it with other systems via interfaces.

➤ **Why are interfaces so important in your company?**

As an airport, we can consider ourselves like a large general store with many different projects. For instance, a truck plows through a field to lay fiber optic cables to connect outdoor transmitters for German air traffic control. This is an example of an IT project. We also have more conventional IT projects, such as implementing ERP systems.

The topics at FMG are wide-ranging and cover a large IT system landscape. Therefore, information is distributed across many systems, giving rise to the need for interfaces.

➤ **What is the approach used to develop these interfaces together with itdesign?**

To a certain extent, we work in an agile environment when developing an interface. We first roughly conceptualize internally what we want. The joint implementation process with itdesign is

then very iterative, which has worked well. This process helps us to ensure that we only implement what we need, nothing more and nothing less.

It is only during the operation of the interface that it becomes apparent that some cases have not yet been specified or addressed. Thanks to the iterative approach, we can gradually add the elements we need along the way and achieve the desired benefit faster, such as a reduction in workload.

Meisterplan as a Tool for Tactical Resource Planning

➤ What challenges prompted you to introduce Meisterplan, and why did you choose this tool?

Before implementing Meisterplan, our resource management was a game of Excel bingo: time-consuming, cumbersome, and error prone.

We researched what resource management tools were available in the market and what would best fit our needs. It was a relatively quick decision, so we proceeded with Meisterplan. The core of the matter is Meisterplan provides clarity where all the big competitors have their weakest point, which is in simulation. The best part about Meisterplan is that it fulfills this niche perfectly.

Meisterplan and itdesign clearly communicate that the point is not to make perfectly accurate plans but to use estimates to get a plan that is rough but good enough to use as a basis for informed decisions. In this respect, Meisterplan fits well with our approach.

Furthermore, Meisterplan is easy to use and looks visually appealing, and human beings are influenced by visuals, which is one of the reasons for its success.

➤ How do you use Meisterplan in your company today?

Our success story in implementing Meisterplan is quite nice. When we introduced the topic of IT resource management and transferred our data to Meisterplan, we could see for the first time that our planned demand did not match our capacity at all. We were torn because it was obvious that we couldn't get the projects done with the available resources. We were only able to get the positions approved after we showed with Meisterplan that we would have to cut numerous projects given the current resource availability.

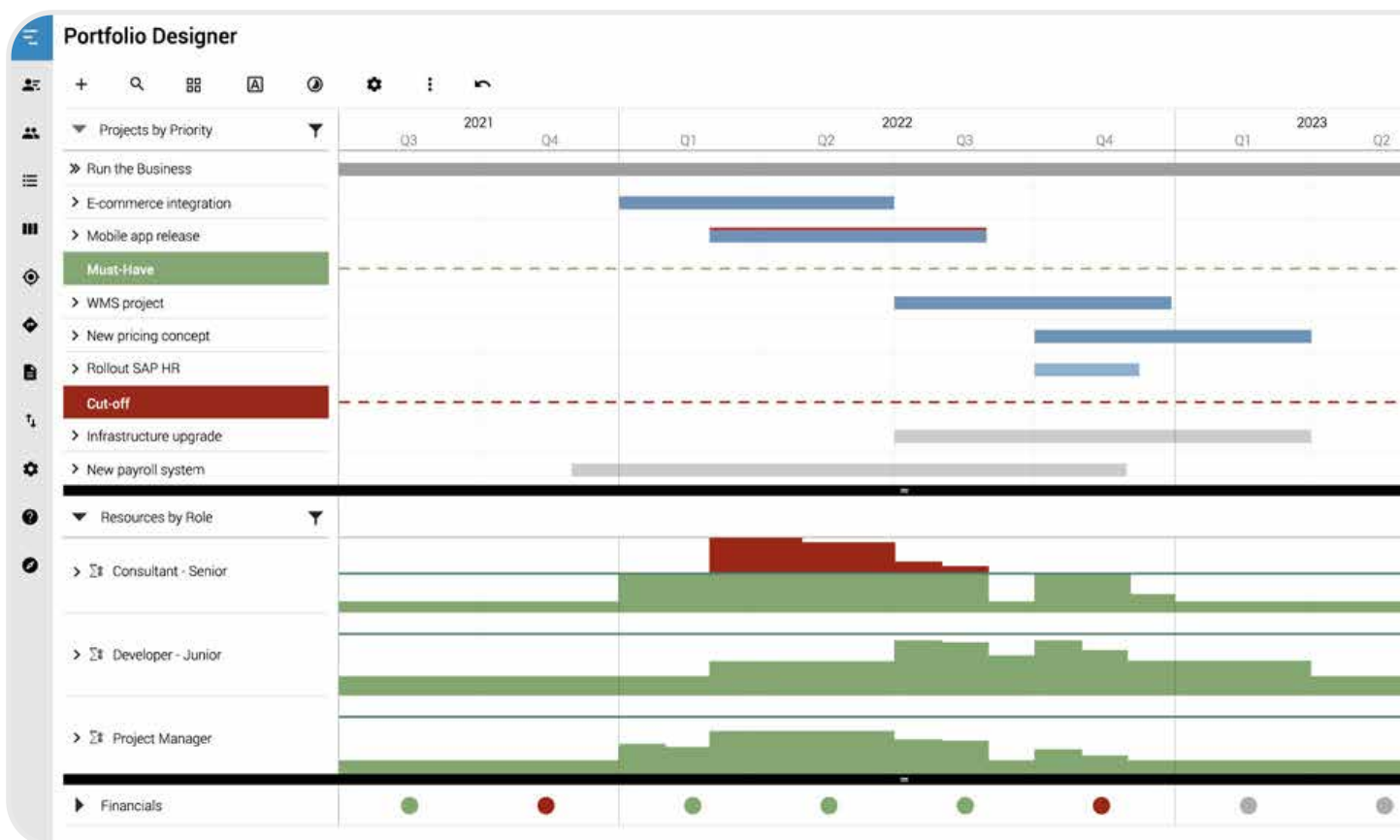
We use Meisterplan in the following way: Every two weeks we hold an IT resource board meeting that brings together all the executives who contribute resources to the projects, which include around 15 to 20 people. We discuss changes to projects, project launches, and new project proposals to be included in the portfolio. Meisterplan is the basis of this discussion and is projected on the wall with a projector or the screen is shared in web meetings. The tool provides us with a

live view of the current status of the project. Based on this, we make decisions such as resource allocations.

➤ **How does the bidirectional interface between Clarity and Meisterplan work? How do you evaluate the interaction?**

We all agreed on the fundamental principle that basic data will continue to be stored in Clarity. Clarity is the gold mine, while Meisterplan is the simulation tool.

To understand how the bidirectional interface works, let me walk you through the process. First, we take the data from Clarity, import it into Meisterplan and simulate the planning there. We make resource allocation decisions during the IT resource board meeting and the data is then exported back to Clarity into the team's hard allocations. Previously, getting this data into Clarity alone used to take an hour, but now it takes only ten minutes. At the next resource board meeting, the fresh data is transferred from Clarity to Meisterplan.



Many Years of Successful Collaboration with itdesign

➤ What is the background of your long-standing partnership with itdesign?

I was not on board at the time, so I do not know the details, but to my knowledge, we found itdesign through a recommendation. itdesign has evolved tremendously over the last 12 years and today no one even comes close to what your team is doing. I've been involved in implementations with other partners, but itdesign's implementation has been the best.

When I talk to people who are interested in Clarity, I make the following argument: itdesign knows how Clarity works and in which direction topics are developing. This gives itdesign the ability to provide us (the customers) with tips and make better decisions on how to implement specific topics. As a result, it gives itdesign a competitive advantage over others, and benefits everyone who works with you.

What I value most about the partnership is the way we work together. Your approachability and technically savvy management team have impressed us with their expertise and partnership. Specific topics are easily communicated during discussions with upper management. Communicating on that level has also helped us.

Last but not least, with my main contact Ralf, I have someone on hand with whom I can connect on a human level. I often work together with Ralf, and we quickly find a solution in a kind of 'pair programming.' Because of the intensive collaboration, I can develop topics in Clarity independently and assess the implementation in a completely different way.

Flughafen München GmbH

- Founded: 1949
- Location: Munich, Germany
- Employees: 8.770
- Industry: Logistics, transport und traffic



Flughafen München GmbH (FMG) was founded in 1949, and operates Munich Airport along with its subsidiaries. Since opening in 1992, Munich Airport has been one of the most important passenger airports in Europe and is the second largest in Germany. It is an important hub for international air traffic. As a "full-service operator", it provides services in every area of airport management.

Get in Touch



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