

Management Consultants Focused on Organizational Change and Improvement in Large Risk Initiatives, Budgets and On-time Delivery of Projects



Keith Korsi
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“Trissential’s value proposition is unparalleled. We have the dedication and appreciation for client value and are not distracted by anything else. If the client does not improve, we have not succeeded.” - Keith Korsi

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CEOCFO: *Mr. Korsi, according to your website, Trissential is helping companies thrive for the long haul. Would you tell us about that?*

Mr. Korsi: Trissential is a company aimed at organizational improvement and value. We are management consultants helping our clients improve. Our Essentialists make sure the portfolio mix is correct, and execute their largest, riskiest programs and projects on time, on budget and on spec. Many clients are running hundreds of millions of dollar programs, and it is a “navy seal approach” where we come in and work with them on these highly sensitive programs. We assemble a team aimed at delivering improvement strategies the right way, making sure it continuously links back to the client’s initial strategic plan. Statistics show that 53% of projects go at least 100% over budget and most of these actually miss the requirements originally intended. When you go in and actually get it right, you help your clients thrive in a hurry.

CEOCFO: *Are you helping your clients craft the program on the concept side?*

Mr. Korsi: Concept engagement is the greatest point of entry for our organization. Trissential performs many portfolio management implementations by tying the right work to the strategies of the organization at large. It creates the perfect scenario if our team works with a client on the portfolio selection in governance, then drives that same engagement through the program setup and delivery.

CEOCFO: *What are some of the major areas where companies fall short in structuring a program?*

Mr. Korsi: It is fascinating. Many companies kick off programs that are not tied to their strategic value. What good is a program that comes in on-time and on-budget, but the business value of the company eroded a year before implementation? We find disarray everywhere, such as firms working on the wrong work and delivering it, or working on the right work but not delivering it. Studies show that just in the ERP world alone, over 90% of those programs or projects either fail or are not implemented. Failure occurs because they are not looking at the org-change side of the house. If you give people a new tool but do not win their hearts and minds, they are not going to use the tool. The programs that people are working on are absolutely transformative with various point of failure. You must have a model of your process on introducing transformation into the organization. Many companies do not know how to do that or what to do with that, therefore they fly blind and do whatever program and project that gets the most air time. Again, there countless points of failure. When you are in our business and look at it, it is almost frightening. Why kick off anything when there are so many things that can go wrong? Trissential brings an enterprise transformation model to the table that has been proven. It is a five-step model, and when you make sure those are covered, you have a great chance of success. The bottom line is there are many ways to help, along with many points of failure we are trying to mitigate.

CEOCFO: *Would you walk us through a project?*

Mr. Korsi: A global company in Wisconsin says every time they implement different projects into their organization, they are never adopted. Trissential enters at the org-change leadership level, and works with the executives to put into action a plan or changes methodology. How the company learns to respond to change is just one area we support and improve.

A large company in Chicago states they have to reinvent their project management office, as it has become redundant and shelf ware. Trissential assists by revitalizing how project management is structured and accomplished in their organization.

In Minnesota, large companies express they are preparing a \$200 million ERP rollout and they want us to execute the global governance over their systems integrators. Trissential partners with them to deliver an immense ERP and assemble and oversee the large SIs that will be used, making sure they deliver. These three examples are what we do on a daily basis.

CEOCFO: *What is the key to amassing information from the people who will be using the system, to understand their needs and concerns?*

Mr. Korsi: You have to talk to our Enterprise Transformation leadership team for a detailed answer. I can tell you from my experience founding and running Trissential, org-change leadership is a huge shortfall with companies. You must win peoples' hearts and minds and you have to get them involved early in the process. You have to ask those same questions of what is and what is not working. Our org-change group is a team of Essentialists who average 30 plus years in this field with PhDs and various capacities of expertise. They have looked at the many org-change methodologies and have come up with Trissential's model. It definitely has tentacles into one size not fitting all. You have to pay

attention to the client's culture. Culture is king and people are starting to figure out that you cannot take a best practice from one place and simply say it will work in another culture. If you are a \$9 billion dollar company, off the beaten path in Wisconsin, you do not necessarily think and act the same way a \$9 billion healthcare company in the heart of Chicago does. We construct a plan that aligns with the client's specific strategic plan; where they are moving their company and how they want to get there. You must remain mindful of that corporate strategy and stay aligned to it. There are many companies that lose sight of the initial plan and just drop things in without any regard to who is using it, when or how they are going to use it, if they want to use it, how long have they been in their job, if they will be able to adapt, and if we have trained them. We believe Trissential comes up with the best of the best to start with and then blend it with the culture.

CEOCFO: *How do you keep on top of technology, trends and devices and then devise a plan that is going to be good for the foreseeable future when three days from now a new Apple could emerge that would make a big difference?*

Mr. Korsi: We have a Chief Essentialist role within Trissential. This role surveys how we deliver and what we deliver. It is then established what best practices will stem from that new technology. We are aware of new things emerging. We analyze and look further into it. We will not jump on the hottest trend because the sustainability is still unknown. We only jump if it has the legs to stay. Trissential is in the kind of prove-it game, and Trissential's Chief Essentialist role continually keeps up on the latest and greatest.

CEOCFO: *How do you people work together so that all the different parts of your engagement come together well?*

Mr. Korsi: Our teams work together exhaustively, yet how we work together depends on the nature of the engagement and what the client has hired us to do. If it is a large transformative program, we have all five disciplines working together. We publish within our company the capability leaders throughout the organization and they talk on a daily basis. We know the capabilities and who the local leaders are. There is a lot to it. When we are together, collectively marching alongside each other, many times we are pulling the clients along so that they can march in unison, creating success for us all. Continually keeping people in the same loop is exhausting. Many of our Essentialists are working with multiple clients and with different members from different teams at Trissential. It is a big job and there is a reason Trissential has Essentialists with over 22 years of experience on average. We have a highly experienced senior level group. We always say Trissential is not a place you come to learn your trade but where you come to perfect it. We are good at it but it is a full-time job to keep people linked up with our own team as well as linked up with the client team.

CEOCFO: *What is your geographic range and where do you see growth?*

Mr. Korsi: Currently Trissential is in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Illinois. In January we launched an office in the Dallas market. We have a three-year plan that includes branch location increases such as Dallas, and introducing new capabilities that we can take to market. We are looking forward to a combination between new market openings and new capability launches.

CEOCFO: *How do you decide which areas to penetrate?*

Mr. Korsi: We worked with a consulting company a while back that advises on market expansion. The company researches organizations, looks out across the US and advises which cities would match up well with your specific offering. We completed the analysis and saved the findings.

CEOCFO: *What has changed since you were acquired by Software Quality Systems AG (AIM: SQS.L) ("SQS")?*

Mr. Korsi: The biggest change was going from a \$35 million regional player to being part of a \$400 million global leading QA and testing company. It is huge. Just being part of that organization has completely expanded both of our footprints. It is a hand-in-glove fit. Trissential has always been involved with the QA, testing, and center of excellence play for our clients because we deliver the largest, riskiest initiatives. Now owned by the world leader in QA and testing, that aspect of our business has exploded. We can now take over the entire QA and testing and managed services. It has been a wonderful compliment to each other. When I first met the CEO of SQS, that was his vision. He was searching for a US company involved at the executive level that engaged in large program portfolio, project control, and business analysis. When you have the largest QA and testing company in the world, and combine it with what we do, you really have an incredible value based solution for your client. SQS sees the world as we do. There has to be an alternative to the big SIs, the global companies, and on the other end of the spectrum of the staffing firms. We believe Trissential has always provided that third alternative in market position, and now we are combined with SQS as a \$400 million global player that focuses completely on client value.

CEOCFO: *How do potential clients find you if they are searching online?*

Mr. Korsi: We are ever expanding our web presence, but that is more from an image standpoint. We have been an outbound sales engine working with client's relationships we have had for 25 years. We are building our brand and helping companies believe in the third alternative in the industry. We are always exhibiting our value proposition. Much of that is just outright, grind-it-out sales activities. Companies are not going to search the web to see who they should give a \$100 million program to. They start with the big boys and ask people in their network. You gain credibility, not from someone finding you on a search engine, but by someone's personal accounts and recommendations. We are involved in many roundtables, speaking engagements, and other social networking activities. Working with all the contacts in the industry is like being published in different mediums. It is a complete marketing and sales blitz. We are not out there selling a commodity; we are out there selling organizational value. People go with whom they trust not who is the first to pop up on Google.

CEOCFO: *When you are talking with a potential client, how do you know who is serious?*

Mr. Korsi: It comes down to years of experience. Our sales team is senior level with an average of 25 years' experience. We have a targeted focus and we must work with the large companies that understand and buy value. We want to talk to CEOs, CIOs, and CFOs at big corporations who are doing risky initiatives. If we have the right person and the right kind of company, we know within five minutes if they see the world the same way, agree with our value proposition, and have the means to work

with a company like ours. It comes down to the skill of whoever is sitting across of us, whether it is sales or delivery people. We can tell if it is an organizational match. If there are cost based staff augmentation play, we are not going to win. Large companies that want to do things a different way, with more of a value prop and with a targeted focus; they see value quickly and those people become clients.

CEOCFO: Why choose Trissential?

Mr. Korsi: Trissential is all about client value and organizational improvement. We are laser focused on how our clients' business can improve; we provide more value, and help boost their bottom and top line. It is that "navy seal approach" increasing our client's value. We are not the big four. We work with senior-level people. We try to come in with half the footprints of the big guys, half the price cost model, and with quality people who are experts in the field. Trissential's value proposition is unparalleled. We have the dedication and appreciation for client value and are not distracted by anything else. If the client does not improve, we have not succeeded.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine

