

EXPERT PORTRAIT

HÉLÈNE ROZELOT,

HEAD OF PLANNING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE



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What is your role at SOLEIL?

Initially, my job title was “Head of planning of SOLEIL project implementation, and its follow-up.” This was in late 2001 when SOLEIL’s construction had not yet started, so there were still major challenges ahead in relation to planning! Then from 2007, when SOLEIL became operational, another component, Head of Quality Assurance, was added to these responsibilities still in vigor.

To be in charge of planning, what does that involve?

Talking with people “on the ground”, with those responsible for the development of an equipment or a given project to assess the duration and sequence of tasks necessary to achieve this, and mobilize all forces needed to complete these tasks within the specified deadlines. To achieve this, three forms of constraint must be taken into account: Time constraints of course: making sure the different

schedules are compatible with one another by paralleling all tasks to be performed, then identifying the risks of delays, which in turn jeopardize the meeting of deadlines set at the start (through work overload on some teams, for example). In fact I need to know who will be involved, but also ensure that they will be available, especially as the same group often works on several projects. This is becoming increasingly true at SOLEIL as the construction of new beamlines for example, is being carried out concurrently with usual operations, maintenance work and availability of beamlines to outside users; so there are a growing number of tasks to accomplish with existing staffing levels.

Then there are the financial constraints: we need to balance the financial commitments related to projects with set billing targets (e.g. the EquipEx project).

And finally technological constraints: at SOLEIL leading-edge equipment designed after R & D studies has by definition never been manufactured before. We therefore do not know exactly how long it will take to make it. This means, more than ever, being in regular contact with the teams involved, to be able to specify more accurately how long the work will take.

So you have an overall vision on how projects are progressing

That is the aim! With all the information that the various Heads of department and project managers provide me with, I can often spot the glitches that threaten the

smooth running of these projects. Detected early enough, it is usually possible to anticipate - outsource a task, for example - and thus avoid bottlenecks. Such decisions are taken in response to regular reports (every two months) that I present to top management. I make these syntheses of the progress of projects in collaboration with Pascale Prigent, who coordinates the installation of equipment on the beamlines, and Philippe Eymard, responsible for buildings and infrastructure.

And the “quality assurance” part, what does that consist of?

It is in two parts. I must ensure that a set of provisions are in place that will minimize risks at the organizational level. In other words, make sure that things are “streamlined” in terms of operational procedures and mechanisms. At SOLEIL these are matrix operations: projects involve groups from different divisions, include a wide variety of tasks, with staff sometimes working in parallel on several projects. To avoid suffocation and stress it is important to develop working methods that run as smoothly as possible. In my opinion, making people who are engaged in a transverse project more involved by organizing them into “project groups”, thus valorizing all actors in the project and allowing them to have an overview, is, for example, one approach. Effective informal practices already in place would benefit from being formalized. Why reinvent each time something

that has been proven?!

One could say that these actions are part of a “quality assurance” process. On the other hand I am also responsible for the establishment of a process that can be described as “product assurance”: provisions to ensure the reliability of equipment and that it meets requirements. A tool such as CMMS, which physically lists all the SOLEIL equipment, its identity, configuration etc., can store a history of the life of equipment and draw up operational statistics, i.e. records their reliability. It is then up to us to find ways (see check list...) to quickly become operational again after failures or to implement preventive maintenance.

How would you describe your job?

My job is extremely rich and varied in terms of interactions, relationships and tasks to accomplish. This is time-consuming, and I am in contact with almost all staff at SOLEIL! Yet, in the end, I often work alone, for example to produce all the syntheses, which is sometimes difficult. And I can have the unenviable role of being the harbinger of bad news when I have to announce that a project will be completed later than expected... But when I see that more and more of my colleagues are sensitive to aspects of planning and quality assurance, and they understand its purpose and interest, I think that we are getting somewhere!

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