Chapter 15

Automating Competency Development Program for Integrating Graduates in EDC Workforce:
Issues and Challenges

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project aimed at developing a system to manage the development of young university graduates and equip them with the experience and skills necessary for integrating them in the company workforce. The case study focuses on three sections. The first section addresses the development of the Proof Of Concept (POC) that aimed at creating a prototype that was then enhanced in terms of its functional capabilities and data management tasks to meet the set objectives. The second section addresses how the POC was transformed to a fully functional multi-user system that was later utilized by all the divisions within the company. The third section touches on how the experience obtained was later used to help in building a unified system for the oil and gas sector in the country. The case also discusses the challenges, measures, and counter measures taken to address them, and the lessons learned to ensure the project was delivered to stakeholders.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND

The company is multi-site Energy Distribution Company and will be referred to as (EDC) throughout this chapter. It belongs to a multi company group representing the Energy Sector in the country. The company has a policy to recruit young graduates and to prepare them to be integrated in the workforce, but the process was not formalized. In this case study, discussions will address how the process was perceived by different stakeholders in EDC, how it was analyzed then redesigned (many times) with numerous revisions until it became a mature, fully automated and easy to use system covering the process to meet and exceed the set objectives.

Initially, records of about (50) graduates from different disciplines of science and engineering were used in the POC. By the time the finished product was commissioned, data of over 200 graduates was populated.

SETTING THE STAGE

Initially and until 1998, the development of recruited graduates in EDC was a manual process, where a profile was created for every graduate to follow up on his / her progress. The technology utilized was based on Microsoft office tools, where the initial profile contained a list of development milestones that was superficial in nature most of the time. The development details were left for the individual divisions and the assignment of coaches and supervisors were not formal. The philosophy was simple and rotated around sending the graduates to as many courses as needed to assist them to execute the job each was assigned to do, then assign each graduate to tasks on weekly / monthly basis and follow up the progress he / she makes against these tasks. No formal assessments were carried out and there were no plans / benchmarks to refer to so that development schemes / patterns could be improved.

Issues and challenges encountered during the different phases of the "Project Life Cycle" are the core of this case study with emphasis on the cultural constraints and challenges encountered during each phase.

The case study aims at providing the audience with examples of how the cultural and regional factors affected the process of developing a formal system then automating it and the overall impact these constraints had on the project. In some sections, it touches on methods and techniques used to counter measure the impact of these challenges and factors, which were seen in some cases as major threats to the project success.

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