Chapter V

Employee Self-Service HR Portal Case Study: Access, Content, & Application

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Abstract

A number of Australian companies have realized the relative quick gains with low associated risks that can be achieved through the business-to-employee (B2E) model. Employee Self Service (ESS) is a solution based on the B2E model and it enables employee access to the corporate human resource information system. This chapter looks at the development of a human resources (HR) ESS portal and presents the findings of a case study of three Australian organizations that have implemented an ESS portal. A model depicting portal maturity is presented and analysis shows that ESS portals can be categorized as first generation with an “Access Rich” focus, second generation with a “Collaboration Rich” focus, or third generation with an “Application Rich” focus. The information and process
focus of the ESS portal of three organizations will be presented and will be used to place the organization into the portal development model proposed by Brosche (2002).

Introduction

Approximately 320 of Australia’s top companies have implemented SAP’s ERP system (SAP R/3), and of these approximately 150 have implemented the human resources (HR) module, with 33 implementing the ESS component. These companies include Toyota, Westpac, RMIT, National Australia Bank, Siemens, Telstra, and Linfox (Hawking & Stein, 2002). In recent times there has been a plethora of research associated with the impact and implications of e-commerce. Much of this research has focused on the various business models, such as business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C), with the importance of developing customer and partner relationships being espoused. There has been little attention paid to the potential of B2E systems and the role that B2E systems can play in improving business-to-employee relationships. Many organizations have realized the relative quick gains with low associated risks that can be achieved through the B2E model.

The B2E human resources Employee Self Service (ESS) system is claimed to incorporate “best business practice” and therefore the significant growth in ESS systems (Webster Buchanan, 2002) is understandable when you consider the potential return on investment of ESS applications. Lehman (2000) saw ESS transforming labor-intensive, paper-based HR forms to digital-enabled forms, allowing a 50% reduction of transaction costs, 40% reduction in administrative staffing, 80% reduction in management HR duties, and a 10-fold speed-up of HR processes (Workforce, 2001). Many of Australia’s larger companies and public sector organizations are implementing ESS functionality as an adjunct to their enterprise resource planning (ERP) human resources systems, and this chapter looks at case studies of three major Australian organizations, the pre-eminent Australian telecommunications company and two state government departments.
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