



Chapter XX

Enterprise Systems Education: A Vendor's Approach — Oracle University's Practice

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ABSTRACT

SAP and Oracle (including PeopleSoft and J.D. Edwards) are the major enterprise systems vendors in the marketplace. Yet most of the universities within the USA, Canada, and Germany that have an enterprise system curriculum integrate SAP's enterprise systems. As a result of the recent PeopleSoft merger, Oracle is becoming a major player in the education industry. Oracle enterprise systems are not only suitable for large and medium companies but also small companies. Oracle enterprise systems are appealing alternatives for institutions to consider in regard to integrating enterprise systems into their curricula. Thus, we are going to introduce this global application vendor's Oracle Academic Initiative, Enterprise System and its related education — Oracle University's practice. An alternative approach to delivering enterprise system education, developed through experience and literature, using Oracle E-business Suite in higher education is discussed.

INTRODUCTION

Although the global marketplace is dominated by a few enterprise systems (ES) vendors, including SAP, Oracle, PeopleSoft, and so forth, most of the universities that provide enterprise system education integrate SAP's ES into their curricula (Strong, Johnson, & Mistry, 2004). One reason for such a widespread incorporation of SAP into university curriculum is due to the early introduction of the SAP Academic Alliance program.

In this chapter, we will briefly review the experience of teaching ES using SAP in universities. Challenges of integrating ES into university curriculum are discussed and four major ES vendor's academic alliance programs are also compared. Then an alternative approach, the Oracle Academic Initiative (OAI) program, incorporating their ES — Oracle E-Business Suite, will be discussed. It follows with a detailed introduction of the Oracle Academic Initiative. A comprehensive case, Vision Enterprise that Oracle University uses to train its customers, is proposed as a viable alternative to be used in a variety of courses in a business school curriculum. Finally, one university's experience of using the Oracle E-Business Suite 11i will be discussed.

The following section briefly reviews the literature in the integration of ES into university curriculum.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Numerous universities around the world have implemented some kind of ES education in the last 10 years or so (Antonucci, Corbitt, Stewart, & Harris, 2004). Despite the growth in ES education, the integration of ES into the curriculum remains a major challenge for many universities (Rosemann, 2004; Rosemann & Stewart, 2001). Although some have shown success by bringing students to appreciate the integrated nature of business operation (Hajnal & Riordan, 2004), a problem encountered by most universities, beyond issues related to curriculum, training and outside support, is the availability of a comprehensive case to be used in the classroom setting (Fedorowicz, Gelinas, Jr., Usoff, & Hachey, 2004; Johnson, Lorents, Morgan, & Ozmun, 2004).

By their nature, business operations are integrated. To better serve customers, businesses are changing their operational approach to process-oriented management. To ensure an efficient and effective operation of a business, the alignment of information systems (IS) and information technology (IT) with business goals is a necessity. Nevertheless, businesses have been struggling with such integration. A recently survey of key issues in organizations (as ranked by information systems executives) shows that the alignment required for integration has appeared at the top of the list for the last decade (Luftman, 2005). In education, to illustrate the interrelationships between functions and to fully demonstrate the efficacy of the linkage between organizational goals, strategies, performance measurement and processes, a comprehensive case is needed. Thus, the education of ES should move to a cross-functional orientation, rather than a modular focus.

In integrating ES education into university curriculum, prior experience demonstrates that it is important to have a hands-on laboratory component in the course (Coulson, Shayo, Olfman, & Rohm, 2003). Yet, frequently the abundance of detailed operational requirements to operate the system in existing lab-based ES courses hinders the teaching effectiveness (Davis & Comeau, 2004). Such operational requirements — non-business (technical) oriented, are necessary for effectively using the ES for classes, thus it is necessary to be

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