

Chapter V

Planning and Managing ICT Change

Change management is the top concern for I.T. directors for a second year running. A survey of more than 200 I.T. leaders at this year's I.T. Directors Forum revealed that 47% believe managing change is the most important issue they face, up from 42.1% in 2006 (www.computerweekly.com/225114 - 2007)

A mission-critical I.T. project to replace hard copy intelligence on threats to United Kingdom (UK) security with a secure network that links government offices in the UK and overseas is due for completion in 2009 – five years later than originally planned (Tony Collins, Computer Weekly – www.computerweekly.com/225663).

INTRODUCTION

Information Systems (IS) has borrowed many techniques from other disciplines. However, many of these have been borrowed from areas where the outcome from projects is more certain. Virtually all projects are liable to have changing requirements. In IS there are so many variables that need to be considered before, during, and after a project has been completed. It is one thing to identify what those variables are and another to react to the changing circumstances.

The question IS must address is whether it is inevitable that projects of a certain size and length will fail to deliver expected benefits. IS is trying to hit a moving target. The 'contract' for a new information system is agreed at a comparatively early stage. All parties agree on requirements and the project team retreats to build the system. This can be a lengthy process. For a change in the process to take place participants must agree that the change is worthwhile. The system developers would be much happier with a fixed set of requirements.

The methodologies that support this process tend to provide more emphasis on control at the expense of planning. They would be more appropriate in static business environments. Even in this situation there will be project failures. The initial premise for an IS project should be that *there will be change*. The methodologies should then provide enough flexibility to allow for the forthcoming changes. Ideally a vision of the implemented system should be formulated at an early stage.

One certainty of the IS development process appears to be that change will take place when the system is installed. From changing one line of code to implementing an inter-organizational information system change will occur. It is only the scale of change that will be different. This chapter will debate the issues surrounding the current way we develop information systems and attempt to identify the areas that could be changed to make the process more effective in the future.

A hands-on approach to understanding the management of **ICT change** will be used within this chapter. It is hoped that it will pay dividends for any organization contemplating any kind of technological change.

Exhibit 5.1.

Mini Case: Change Management

Change management is the top concern for information technology (I.T.) directors for the second year running in a survey of more than 200 I.T. leaders at this year's (2007) I.T. Directors Forum. Considering the climate of rapid, continual and ubiquitous technological innovation, the increase is no surprise, said Roger Ellis, chairman of the I.T. Directors Network. He warned that the scale of change made it an even bigger challenge to manage that change, while keeping the business going. Dave Aron, vice-president and research director at analyst firm Gartner, said the lack of a standard or framework to guide I.T. directors is one of the main reasons why change management continues to be a major challenge. Another contributing factor is the lack of skills in change management and, more specifically, leadership skills in this area. (www.computerweekly.com/225114).

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