Chapter 6
Strategic Review of the Organisation for Public Service Delivery in the Digital Era

ABSTRACT

This chapter initiates the pathway through the ISSP framework described in the previous chapter. The chapter focuses on three aspects. It provides the approach for conducting the organisational information systems strategic review applying McFarlan's Strategic Grid. This model helps an organisation to determine the focus of its current application systems, where the entity wishes to be in the future, and generally assess where the competition (or best practice benchmark entity) is currently positioned. The chapter then provides a method to carry out the organisational data usage strategic review applying Marchand's Area of Information Use model. This model aids management to determine to what purpose the current available information is being utilised. Finally, the chapter illustrates how a government entity may conduct a review of its customer persona profiles to enable it to explicitly know its customers, thus enabling it to promote and target its specific services. All the models and techniques applied in this chapter are supported by examples.

INTRODUCTION

To change societies you need to organize with others who share your views. Gro Harlem Brundtland, Prime Minister of Norway, (1981, 1986–89, and 1990–96)

The previous chapter provided a logical framework for determining the ICT requirement of an organisation to ensure that an effective ISSP for Public Service delivery in the digital era is defined and implemented. However, before the ICT requirements of an organisation may be determined and defined, a strategic review of the organisation regarding the following three key aspects must be conducted:

1. Organisational IS strategic review;
2. Organisational data usage strategic review;
3. Organisational review of the customer persona profiles.

The strategic review of these three aspects examine the current status of the organisation under examination regarding its utilisation of the application systems; how the data and information generated by these application systems are applied to resolving the organisation's concerns; and to determine the current categories of end users that are exploiting the application systems, including the websites, and web and App applications.

The above strategic reviews provide the fundamental information regarding the current position of the organisation being examined and where management desires their organisation to be positioned in the future.

BACKGROUND

The basic principle when defining any strategy is to ensure that the strategy is based upon creative thinking and has a long term horizon. Creativity is not easy to achieve and requires unique characteristics of those who have the responsibility to define the strategy, particularly regarding ICT. A strategy defines what management wants to do and where it wants to position the organisation in the future. Strategic thinking is a continuous process that often reflects the vision of executive management and should not be seen as a task that is conducted every three years. An ICT strategic review should be viewed as an opportunity for management to take stock of the current situation and determine where the organisation is heading in terms of its ICT aspirations making sure that these aspirations complement and are aligned with the Corporate Business Strategy of the organisation. Hence, a strategic review of the three aspects identified previously provide an opportunity to give new energy to the management team where they can raise fundamental issues and challenge the current direction in relation to what is taking place within and outside the organisation.

Organisational culture is important when conducting the ICT strategic review because culture reflects conventional policies, the past and the assumptions that mould the organisation as a collective system. However, it must be recognised that organisational culture may hamper innovative thinking, particularly if it is too durable and narrow-minded. Hence, an organisational culture can make new ideas and new thinking harder to achieve and may become a barrier and hinder the ICT strategic review process. Therefore, those leading the ICT strategic review process need to be familiar with the operational mechanisms of the culture in a particular organisation and be able to use those features that provide an advantage and discard the rest, while at the same time be prepared to make decisions no matter how difficult they may seem.

An ICT strategic review must be responsive to any adjustment to the Corporate Business Strategy and to the changes to the organisation's external environment. However, this requires a dynamic and responsive organisation that is headed by an equally dynamic and responsive leadership. A prerequisite to an effective ICT strategic review is a well defined communications plan that involves employees and

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