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Implementation of a Personnel Management System "Beaufort": Successes and Failures at a Dutch Hospital

Tatyana V. Bondarouk
University of Twente, The Netherlands

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case describes a project concerning the implementation of a personnel management system—Beaufort—in Medinet, one of the larger regional general hospitals in The Netherlands. The project plan included two sequential phases: firstly, the introduction of Beaufort to the central personnel and salary department (PSA) located in one building, and secondly, its introduction to the Human Resource (HR) managers distributed in remote clusters throughout the entire organization. The PSA department implemented Beaufort in accordance with the scheduled plan (phase 1). However, phase 2 was complicated by several social and technical factors that led to negative user attitudes, uncertainty, delays, and pessimism towards the implementation. Medinet approached a critical moment when a decision had to be taken as to what should next be done in order to keep the project running, and to get the decentralized users to more fully use Beaufort. Two-and-a-half years after Beaufort was introduced, the management had to freeze the project in order to find out when and how mismanagement had taken place, and what kinds of reactivation actions should be undertaken in the immediate future. The case shows clearly that there are variations in users' behaviors and acceptance of the

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new system in the two phases due to differences in technical and human issues. It provides valuable insights into IT implementation processes within a decentralized organization, and provides examples of the success and challenge factors that might need to be considered in order to get users at remote sites to fully use the system.

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

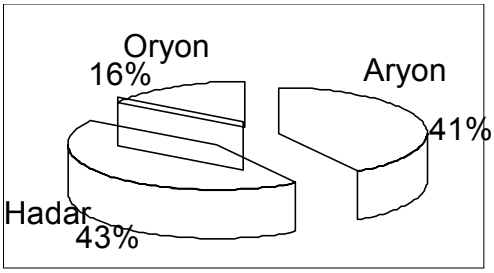
Medinet was founded in 1990 by a merger of three smaller local hospitals and two polyclinics. The fusion aimed at combining the efforts of different regional healthcare organizations, and improving and centralizing the healthcare service in the region.

Medinet today is one of the largest general hospitals in The Netherlands, with 1,070 beds and around 3,800 employees. Nowadays, the primary processes in Medinet (examination, treatment, and nursing of patients) take place in five clusters: two are located at ‘Altair’, two at ‘Hadar’, and one at ‘Oryon’. The distribution of employees among the sites is shown in *Figure 1*.

‘Altair’ and ‘Hadar’ are situated close to each other in a large city. Each one is subdivided into two separate functional clusters (see *Figure 2*). The fifth cluster ‘Oryon’ is situated in a neighboring town, located 7.3 miles away. There are also two smaller medical units located 6.7 miles and 9.15 miles from the city. Each cluster is further subdivided into departments, and in total Medinet has 64 departments.

One of the central management units in the hospital is the Strategic Centre that covers the social, information, personnel, and financial functions. At the same time, each department has its own personnel manager who implements the central strategy. Medinet has support departments that help in running the primary processes—Facilities Affairs and the Medical Technical Centre. The Strategic Centre, and the supportive departments, have representatives in all clusters who actively communicate across Medinet and contribute to building up a united Medinet culture. Every location still keeps, to an extent, its own ‘pre-fusion’ norms and traditions, especially concerning management processes and task divisions (*Figure 2*).

Figure 1. Distribution of Employees in Medinet per Location



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