Chapter 14
Managing the Replacement of Legacy HR System

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Application software projects have always been viewed as a massive challenge by companies, particularly when it comes to replacing legacy in-house developed systems with package solutions. Challenges start by the resentment to change typically demonstrated by a good percentage of the user community, followed by the many pitfalls encountered due to the changes that are included / excluded while the project progresses with user hesitance to accept the new system. The project had many challenges that are not typical of a properly managed one and to make matters worse, it had challenges that were related to poor priority settings that were attached to some non-professional aspects. Cultural issues came as a bonus in this project. The challenges and the counter measures taken to ensure the timely delivery of the project with minimum damage possible will be addressed as the chapter progresses, reflecting on how the objective shifted towards the end of its life to a win/win scenario.

CASE STUDY OBJECTIVES

The case at hand is an example of how a project could take a dangerous turn from what was agreed on. It also reflects on the results from additional detours that were made during its life cycle until sign off.

This case study highlights issues and challenges pertaining to the different phases of the "Project Life Cycle," with emphasis on the cultural constraints and challenges encountered during each phase. It aims at providing the audience with examples of how cultural and regional factors affected the Project and the overall impact it had on the project. It also addresses methods and practices used to counter measure the impact of factors that were seen as major threats to the Project success.

For organization, the case study is divided into the following (6) sections: 1) Setting the Stage, 2) Background of the Business Requirements, 3) The Project Structure, 4) System Implementation and Challenges, 5) Reflecting on the Project/ Achievements, and 6) Lessons Learnt.

SETTING THE STAGE

The Customer

A multi-site company with operational sites distributed over a wide geographical area. The company employed thousands of employees and contractors under different schemes such as direct hire, contractors, and personnel from shareholding companies. The list of shareholders included some highly reputed international oil and gas giants.

The company had an in-house developed legacy HR system that served its needs during the eighties and early nineties of the twentieth century.

The HR Division (the custodians of the new system) consisted of eight functional areas (Departments) that covered Recruitment, Personnel and Employee Relations, Job Evaluation, Career Development, Training, Payroll, Compensations, and Payroll Budgeting.

The Vendor (Main Contractor)

An IT company reputed as a leading professional services provider in the Middle East. It had a customer base of companies serving a myriad of industries such as Telecommunications, Banking, and Commerce. It represented a number of International IT companies in the Middle East.

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