

Preparation Sheet for MI 703 Computer Information Systems

Session #11 April 11th: Adoption, Diffusion & Implementation of Emerging IT

Session Overview

In this session we continue on the subject of Adoption, Diffusion and Implementation of IT through the analysis of a pair of Harvard case studies. Both fall under the general topic of emerging IT adoption/implementation, but as you will see, the organizational situations and technologies involved are very different, and as a result, pose very different challenges.

The first part of class will be devoted to an analysis of the Wikis at Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein (DKW) case. The IT department at DKW (an investment bank) was an early adopter of Wiki technology, an emerging tool for group communication and collaboration. The IT department found Wikis to be quite useful, and now the CIO is mulling over whether to promote adoption of Wiki technology by the trading desks and other business units of DKW, and if so, how. Thus, the main issue for this case is a decision about whether to adopt, and if so, how.

In the second part we will analyze the Cisco ERP case. The goal is to develop an understanding of how to effectively implement large scale IT systems after the investment decision has already been made. It does a firm no good to invest in IT unless it can implement that technology, but many implementations fail. A wide variety of processes and tactics can help improve the odds, but only if senior management chooses the right processes and tactics, given the specifics of the implementation at hand.

As you will see from these cases, major IT implementations are the business of all managers, not just those in IT!

Required Readings and Study Questions

1. (Refresher) **Lecture Note: IT Implementation and Assimilation, Fichman** (coursepack)
 - Although this reading was already assigned for Session #10, I would suggest you quickly reread it for this session, since it pertains equally to today's topic.
2. **Case Study: Wikis at Dresdner Kleinwort Wasserstein (A)** (coursepack)
 - **Central Challenge:** Managing IT innovation adoption and implementation.
 - **Preparation Questions:**
 - DKW is considering the roll out the SocialText Wiki to *business units* outside of IT. Does it make sense for business units of DKW to be an early adopter of Wikis?
 - A Wiki is fairly easy to implement technically, but assimilation may be another matter. Do you think assimilation will be difficult? What barriers, if any seem most salient?
 - If DKW were to proceed with implementation/assimilation, what specific tactics do you recommend? Should they go with more of a "light" (low-key/low resource) approach, or a more "heavy" (vigorous, resource intensive) implementation approach? Why?
 - If DKW proceeds, do you think DKW units outside are likely to thoroughly assimilate the Wiki in the end? Why or why not?

3. Case: Cisco Systems, Inc.: Implementing ERP (Coursepack)

- **Central Challenge:** Effectively implementing large scale IT.
- **Preparation Questions:**
 - How important is ERP to the overall IT architecture within Cisco? (Think about the issues that prompted consideration of ERP in the first place). How is this degree of importance driven by Cisco's business model?
 - Would you call the Cisco ERP implementation a "complete success"? Why or why not?
 - Consider the various factors and tactics that were present on Cisco's ERP implementation. What made the difference between success and failure of the project? Where had the ERP team been "smart"? Where had the ERP team been "lucky"? Do you think that they could do such a project again if they had to? Why or why not?
 - How did Cisco measure success? In general, how and when should you assess the success of an ERP (or any enterprise level) implementation?

Optional Readings

1. [Beating Murphy's Law](#), Chew et al, *SMR*, 1991 (Myfiles)
 - The main points from this reading are presented in the Lecture Note. This article of course provides more depth.
2. [An Incremental Process for Software Implementation](#), Fichman & Moses, *SMR*, 1999 (Myfiles)
 - This article explains more about incremental implementation (a key tactic described in the Lecture Note) and describes one approach to structuring an incremental implementation. This can also be seen as an example what a rapid applications development ("RAD") methodology actually looks like. It's much more involved than "do things fast"!