



CHANGE MANAGEMENT –IS IT STILL RELEVANT?

Not much has been heard about change management lately. Has it come and gone like so many other management fads?

I suspect that the lack of recent publicity in change management has a lot to do with the markets difficulty in understanding what change management is and how it relates to information management practices.

Our definition of change management is change that is planned and purposeful.

It's a fairly broad definition that describes a concept rather than a solution. And it's a concept that's not easy to package up and sell as you would a commodity which may account for the difficulties that vendor have in including it as part of their solutions. The unknown quantity of change activities, difficulties in defining success and measuring results makes change management a risky venture for system vendors.

Nevertheless it's still an essential element for successful implementation where user uptake is the measure of success. And without uptake of systems, there is no return on investment for the customer, no matter how rich and sexy the system functionality is.

We need to examine and understand what it is that makes users change from their current systems and embrace new ones. And what change initiatives should be employed to assist in this process?

Change management initiatives come in a variety of flavours and are directly linked to the "what's in it for me" factor. There is no "one size fits all" solution in change management - each user or manager has their own reasons for embracing or rejecting change. Nevertheless there are many areas of commonality and we will examine some of these over the next few issues.

The Business Case As A Change Management Tool

Historically the business case has been seen primarily as a means of obtaining funding support by providing information to the economic buyers that enables them to judge the merit of a given business undertaking/project and to establish its priority in relation to other projects.

The business case is also a powerful change management tool for economic buyers, expanding our definition to include all managers who control operating budgets eg line managers. These are the people who will invest their peoples time and resources if they believe there will be a significant return on their investment and contribute to the operating bottom line.

Line managers directly influence the uptake of new systems by their people as they direct them in their day-to-day work.

Line managers can also kill off systems faster than any other agent known to mankind, if they perceive no value or added burden in the new systems. The "what's in it for me" factor is usually financial and needs to be well expressed. This is where the business case can be used to increase the visibility of information management practices in each operational area by illuminating the costs associated with current information management practices and the impact of these practices on the bottom line.



The Need For A Credible Business Case

Most business cases for information management systems are flawed for a number of reasons.

Firstly the business case always assumes 100% system take-up by users.

Secondly, it is not easy to estimate the services and implementation support costs that contribute to user uptake (the change management costs). The industry is now recognising that these costs may run as high as 50% of the total system costs.

However, once the budget's been presented to the economic buyers and you've picked them back up off the floor, services costs are generally the first to be pruned – severely! What's usually left is a system, but not the means to implement it.

As a direct consequence the business case is laid to waste, because, the return on investment is dependent on the uptake by users.

Note - There's nothing sadder than a under resourced, under utilised document management system languishing on a server somewhere neglected by users.

You can avoid this by addressing the benefits half of the business case.

Many will recall the 1997 Gartner Group report called *101 Ways to Waste Time on Document Management* in which they stated that:

"Knowledge workers spends 20% of their time or 8 hours per week performing document management activities in non automated environments.....Knowledge workers not using integrated document management (IDM) systems will spend more time on document management activities: 20% in 1997 vs. 30% by year-end 2000 (0.8% probability). Knowledge workers using IDM systems will spend less time on document management activities: 20% in 1997 vs. 5% by year-end 2000 (0.8% probability)"

This is useful information and the Gartner Group findings have found their way into many a business case since then. But there is no data more powerful nor harder to discredit than that which relates directly to the business problems at hand.

Recent surveys on document management practices within our own clients for business case purposes reveal that in some organisations "knowledge workers" are spending up to 40% of their time in document management activities. When these metrics are validated through case studies and direct observation of work practices, the basis for a powerful business case is formed.

A business case that credible and hard for the economic buyer to refute.

A business case that supports the services costs associated with change management and implementation because they can be directly related to user productivity.

Next issue - Change management as a process not a project.

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