

Association for Information Systems AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

ICIS 1994 Proceedings

International Conference on Information Systems
(ICIS)

12-31-1994

Building IT Competence in Line Management: Investigation of a Best Practice

Blaize Reich
Simon Fraser University

Michelle Brown

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis1994>

Recommended Citation

Reich, Blaize and Brown, Michelle, "Building IT Competence in Line Management: Investigation of a Best Practice" (1994). *ICIS 1994 Proceedings*. 11.
<http://aisel.aisnet.org/icis1994/11>

This material is brought to you by the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in ICIS 1994 Proceedings by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

BUILDING IT COMPETENCE IN LINE MANAGEMENT: INVESTIGATION OF A BEST PRACTICE

Blaize Horner Reich
Faculty of Business Administration
Simon Fraser University

Michelle Brown
Faculty of Administrative Studies
York University

ABSTRACT

RESEARCH QUESTION

During a prior research study, the first author interviewed the Vice President of IS for Common Insurance Group, one of the largest life insurance companies in Canada. She learned that the company had transferred more than forty information systems (IS) people into various management jobs throughout its insurance divisions during the twelve years from 1980 to 1992. Permission to conduct an in-depth study of this unusual IS-to-line project was granted to the researchers in 1993.

Our interest in investigating this organization was to find answers to three questions:

1. What organizational factors (e.g., structures, incentives, training) made it possible for Common Insurance Group to move IS managers into line positions with regularity for over a decade?
2. What individual factors affected the ease with which these IS-trained people made the transition into line positions?
3. Within Common Insurance Group, what are the results of having many business unit managers with extensive IS experience?

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study will investigate the research questions at two levels, organizational and individual. There are three stages in the research: 1) initial interviews with ex-IS managers, 2) a matched survey of non-IS managers, ex-IS managers and current IS managers, and 3) follow-up interviews with selected managers.

Our exploratory research model suggests that Organizational Factors, Individual Factors, Job-Related Factors and Transition Factors influence the movement of an IS manager to a line management job. Further, movement of IS people into the line will have both organizational and individual results.

SUMMARY

Our hope is that, at the end of this research project, we will understand clearly how Common Insurance Group accomplished a very uncommon feat. The revised model will create a solid foundation for further research and the set of anecdotal cases will assist other organizations in creating programs to increase IT competence in their line areas.