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Yen Zen Wang

Sheng Chung Chen

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Missions for Executives in Developing an E-Management Platform

Yen Zen Wang *, Sheng Chung Chen **

* Dept. of Industry Management

** Dept. of Electric Engineering Dept.

Far East College

Tainan, Taiwan

clkchen@cc.fec.edu.tw

Abstract

Under the impact of internet, many promises of e-management are provided. However, so far, executives are still skeptical in developing e-management platform, the anxieties come from the fact that too many IT developing projects failed. In practice, IT is a specialty which is quite heterogeneous to business management, to achieve e-management makes the issue of integration of these two domains can not be neglected any more.

A failed project is by no means the duty of IT team only; it would be the reason that the interaction between IT team and executives is too weak. To reduce the gaps in platform developing, executives have some missions are offered, they are: a. Let IT group understand executives' business affairs; b. Review architecture of platform; c. Involve to system test. It deserves to assert that, in developing an e-management platform, executives are not just the users, but also a part of developing members.

1. Introduction

Under the impact of internet, prefixing "e-" to nouns has become a token of this era, for example, e-business, e-commerce, e-learning, e-management ... and what you like. However, rigorously surveying, "e-something" is not just a slogan, it still indicates that two different specialties – IT and the field after "e-" should be integrated seamlessly. For example, e-management implies that executives can make decisions in aid of a platform which is built by IT, however, whether this platform can be satisfied by executives is always skeptical, since IT is a specialty which is quite heterogeneous to business management. In other words, promises of this platform would not be fulfilled thoroughly once there are some gaps between these two specialties. Unfortunately, too many failed projects reveal that gaps are almost inevitable. This anxiety just likes a black cloud on internet sky, how to diminish or even ruin such gaps is the incentive of this paper.

No doubt, many executives are skeptical. They've heard outsized promises, and they've spent a lot of time and money on information system developing, but the gain is poor [1]. It would be believed that the critical causes of failure of system come from software architecture. Though, software and hardware are two main components in an information system, however, the

problems of hardware are much fewer in comparison with software. In software developing, one of important keys to success is team work [2]. The members of the team are not just software developers, but also executives. A successful project developing, both program developers and executives should communicate and cooperate with each other seamlessly.

In this paper, e-management is the subject to be studied. The causes why gaps between IT and management existed will be discussed, and then solutions to avoid such gaps happened are tried to offer.

2. Causes of Failure

A project of an e-management platform developing, in essence, is a project of software systems developing, therefore, the reasons why software products failed in marketing are more or less accommodated to this research. It is well known that software developers' and executives' disdain for rigid procedures lead to failure, in most of projects, instead of conflicts happened, executives always choose to keep away from software team in period of system developing, and make themselves just as users of the e-management platform.

During developing an e-management platform, usually, the time executives involved compared to the one whole system built is very short. Project always commences in necessities collected, in most cases, executives list all necessities to IT team, then they never involved the developing process until system finished. After the system on line, instead of being praised, IT group always receives endless criticisms. Under such weak interaction between IT team and executives, it is difficult to make these two parts cooperate coincidentally.

It is unfair for IT group to bear the burden of proof; a failed information system is by no means the duty of IT team only. To make project success, the causes of failure should be tried to remove. To sum up, the solution to enhance the interaction between IT group and executives should be revealed. If executives could be more aggressive to involve the project developing, the gaps between IT and executives would be reduced significantly. Therefore, in order to make e-management platform being developed successfully, missions for executives should be specified clearly, and this is the main purpose of this paper.

3. Missions For Executives

Usually, IT developers are apt to communicate with machines well. In order to improve the relation to engineers, it would better for executives to be active to discuss with IT team. In other words, there are some missions for executives in developing e-management, they are offered as follows:

a. Let IT group understand executives' business affairs: It is not enough for IT team to construct the platform for executives if only a function list is given. It is necessary for executives to hold a meeting for IT group before project is begun, let IT group know how business run day by day, and what kind of data is important in making decision. Such communication can not be neglected absolutely, or the direction of project will deviate from executives' visions unconsciously.

b. Review architecture of e-management platform: Before programming, architecture of platform should be designed completely, the elements should be reviewed by executives are: user interfaces, data flow and functions. However, almost executives have no IT background, the architecture should be presented by a visual model which can be communicated without any impediment, UML (Unified Modeling Language)[3] would be a very convenient tool in presenting software architecture. Executives have not to hesitate to challenge the architecture, it is very critical, a right architecture is half the success of a project.

c. Involve to system test: System test is a routine step before functions finished, but bias will be inevitable if this step only done by IT group, once something insufficient or inexact found too late, unexpected cost will happen possibly. Executives involve to test system, not only bias

can be reduced, but also schedule of project can be checked.

The gaps between IT team and executives would be diminished, if above obligations could be carried out.

4. Conclusions

Most of time, there are no any overlap between IT group and executives in business, but the impact of e-management creates breakthroughs in these two domains. To develop an e-management platform successfully, the interaction and communication between executives and IT group should be very frequent. To improve the interaction between IT and executives, three missions for executives are offered as: a. Let IT group understand executives' business affairs; b. Review architecture of e-management platform; c. Involve to system test. To specify the missions for executives is to assert that executives are also a part of developing members; they are not just the users of system only.

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