



The implementation of the *Spa Select System*: Coming to grips with the cog in the machine

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ABSTRACT

This paper illustrates the tribulations of implementing a technology-based system to aid management of information at a Spa and a Salon. While the implementation may itself appear to be rather simplistic, a number of issues of concern emerge. These range from inadequate planning, inability to define organizational processes, and resistance to change due to poor management of user skills and interests. While the organization eventually achieved the investment objective it had set out for itself, the process of implementation was riddled with problems—disgruntled employees, unfair compensation plans and a general discontentment with the system. The paper contextualizes a range of issues related to information management and how a technological solution resulted in resistance to change and business process management challenges.

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1. Introduction

A Las Vegas, Nevada-based Spa and Salon had been experiencing a number of challenges in managing its information. While a paper-based system existed for handling the information, the management felt that a technological solution would help in bringing efficiency in the business processes. This resulted in the choice and eventually the implementation of a technology-based solution—the *Spa Select System*. Information management problems that are a consequence of technological implementations have been well researched in the literature (e.g., see Flowers, 1996). However it is useful to review as to how a simple technological implementation, designed to ensure efficiency in the information handling processes, resulted in serious organizational challenges. In many ways the implementation of *Spa Select System* illustrates the dynamic interplay between the context, the content of the change and the organizational processes (Pettigrew, 1987). The Spa and Salon situation also illustrates as to how a ‘cookie-cutter’ implementation approach falls short of realizing benefits, even when the organizational contexts are quite similar.

The paper is organized in four sections. Following a brief introduction, Section 2 illustrates complexities inherent in the Spa and Salon case. It is important to present a detailed analysis of the

case since case studies are considered to be an important vehicle for explaining complex inter-relationships between stakeholders, processes and technologies. Section 3 reviews the major issues in the case in light of the existing literature. Finally, conclusions are presented in Section 4.

2. Case study

2.1. The organizational context

After an executive steering committee meeting, *The Cactus Resort and Club* President, Steve Hoffer,¹ communicated that the organization must receive the Mobil four-star rating, during Mobil's next visit to *The Cactus*. However, the quality of service in the Spa and Salon was recognized as poor, primarily due to the lack of proper information management (no available guest history, inability of receptionists to track paperwork effectively, etc.). This had been an area that the CFO (Chief Financial Officer), Henry Chandler, had wanted to address for the past few years, but the project was continuously delayed. Now, more than ever, he had to be sure that this did not become the reason why the property had not received the four-star rating. He was afraid that the Club President would make him responsible for not having implemented a computer-based information system long time ago. Chandler felt that this weak point in the hotel's infrastructure had gone on long enough.

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¹ In order to maintain confidentiality of the organization and the individuals, all names have been changed.

He informed the CIO (Chief Information Officer), Mike Atkins, that the *Spa Select System* should be operational, in both the Spa and Salon, within 2 months. He assured the CIO that this would avoid affecting the business during the peak season.

The Spa and the Salon, although very closely related, were managed by two different teams. The top manager of the Salon was a well-known hairstylist of Los Angeles, Raymond Philips, who had experience styling many Hollywood actors. He traveled frequently between Las Vegas and Los Angeles, where he also managed his own studio. The Assistant Manager of the Salon, Aurora Smith, came to *The Cactus* as part of an agreement with Philips. She traveled between the two locations as well.

Like the majority of employees working at the Salon, neither managers nor the technicians had any computer experience. The stereotype of the Salon, in the past, had been one of a free spirited “artsy” group of people who do not adapt to change and want to be left alone to concentrate on, as one technician put it, “the art of hairstyling”. In the Salon, information was manually managed. Most stakeholders believed that there was a significant scope for improvement.

The management team of the Spa did not have any computer experience. Operations had been running on a manual system for the past 10 years. However, structurally the Spa had gone through some significant changes over the years. Originally, the Spa had two different roles that worked to serve the guest: porters and attendants. Spa porter’s responsibilities were to ensure that towels and other products were stocked. They also cleaned the lounge, bathrooms, showers, saunas, etc. The Spa attendants were responsible for providing an interface between the Spa services and the guests. This involved checking guests in and out, providing any information requested by guests, along with other services such as coordinating massage or estheticians’ appointments. However, the roles and responsibilities of these positions were slightly modified, with a supervisor overseeing the work of both porters and attendants. The manager in charge at that time felt that such a move would create a team culture at the Spa. As part of the reorganization, Spa porters were promoted to Spa attendants and the job descriptions of the two roles were combined. Although there were some problems with the transformation, largely because of language barriers and professionalism, the transition however was smooth.

2.2. Manual information management system

Relative to the Salon, the Spa experienced significant difficulties in managing manual information flows. This was partially due to the volume of Spa business. There were complaints regarding tracking guests effectively throughout their stay at *The Cactus*, including: losing guest-billing slips; difficulty in tracking cash transactions; lack of guest history; challenges in identifying guest preferences; etc. Irrespective of the nature and scope of the challenges, the manual information management system was not working properly for the Spa.

Typically both the Spa and the Salon handed “passports” to their guests, who were expected to carry these throughout their stay. However, it was difficult for the receptionists to cross-reference appointment times as indicated on the passports and their own records. Hence, there were problems with overbooking and receptionist having to flip through a lot of paper work to figure out the correct appointment times. As a result, the reception desk was cluttered most of the time and it gave an impression of the operation being unstructured and unorganized. Employees were spending a lot of time adding up and backtracking information. Management reporting was also very poor.

The Spa manual information management system posed great difficulty in reconciling accounts and balancing the books. The Spa frequently had more than 450 guests a day, which resulted in an

exorbitant amount of paperwork and an unacceptable time frame to close out, typically taking over 1 h to balance a cashier’s register at closing. When guests were checking out, receptionists were easily frustrated trying to track guest’s paperwork at the different stations throughout the Spa. People in the organization felt that if there were a computer-based system, such issues would be non-existent. All information would be held in the computer system and could be accessed and viewed from any computer terminal.

The Salon, on the other hand, was accustomed to a different volume of business flow and guests. This made it possible to operate relatively smoothly on the manual system, albeit there were some information management problems. The quality of the information available to run core business processes was poor too. In particular, it was not possible to retrieve individual guest history and hence it was difficult to establish strong customer relationships. However, from a receptionist and technicians standpoint, the operation was running well. Tracking guest information was not of a major concern in the Salon.

2.3. Planning and analysis

The computer-based system selection process was relatively simple. The vendor for the project was Select Systems, who would be implementing the *Spa Select System* software. The company was better known for the Spa portion of the program, but had recently begun to fine-tune the Salon functionality. Whenever there were complaints for any aspect of the Salon system, the vendor would work rather diligently to rectify those issues. In spite of issues and shortcomings in the *Spa Select System*, the software was being used in many establishments without any major problems. One such implementation was at the Paradise Bay Resort and Club, a sister concern of *The Cactus*.

Select Systems International was created in 1990, when a Spa owner in California wanted to develop a high-end integrated suite of Windows-based software for large Spa resorts. The end result was a software system that was developed not only for Spa operations, but retail food and beverage outlets as well. The Select Systems hospitality suite had the capability of addressing operational needs in food and beverage point of sale, retail point of sale, Spa and Salon membership and accounting. All modules could be used as stand-alone systems or in any combination to integrate business processes in a suite of software. An appealing benefit for *The Cactus* Resort to use their system was due to two core competencies of the company: product development, and client training and installation. Select Systems had proven its track record for the installation and opening of the Paradise Bay Resort. No significant problems had been reported, either for the initial go-live or in any resultant emergent issues.

Due to the stringent time-lines on the project, two professionals from within *The Cactus* were brought in to assist with the implementation of the system—the Lead Systems Analyst, Seth Sanders, and the assigned Projects Manager, Robert Lewis. Sanders and Lewis knew that the project would be difficult to implement on time. However, they both had worked on system implementations before and were confident they could successfully complete it. The vendor had established a good relationship with Sanders due to a previous implementation of the system at the Paradise Bay Resort and knew they had a reputation of being thorough and in completing implementations on time.

Following a meeting between the Vice-President of Hotel Operations, Arthur Penrose, and other Salon and Spa managers, Sanders and Lewis toured the Spa and Salon to identify business requirements and critical issues for the project. Sanders identified the specific locations where network connectivity was needed and checked if any engineering work would be required in order to install computers and printers. After discussions with managers

and numerous employees, Lewis flowcharted the business processes (see *Appendices 1 and 2*). He realized that there would be a need to modify job descriptions in order for the processes to run as efficiently as possible. This was because the Spa attendants could now also make reservations, rather than just guest check in and check out.

2.4. Managing user training

In terms of scale, the project involved 19 points of contact and 107 staff members from both the Spa and the Salon. Typically for a project of this size, Select Systems would send three support staff members for the configuration stage and would reduce that to two for training and installation. The limited time to finish the project did not give Select Systems the ability to properly find the right people, thus creating a staffing level that was inadequate. Moreover, there were employees that had never used a computer before. To make the situation even worse for the implementation team, there were some employees who were not well versed in the English language. What once was a job that required little writing ability as Spa porters, now was transformed into a job that required significant information management skills—entering guest names and detailed information into the computer system and editing Spa and Salon data for the services provided.

Because of the overall computer illiteracy of some of the people involved, it seemed unlikely that the implementation would be as smooth as originally expected. The management in general was also intimidated by the adoption of new information technologies by the organization. As a result, Lewis found himself doing much of the work that should have ideally been shared among all the managers. In fact, the Salon Manager completely removed himself from all aspects of the information management planning sessions and designated the Assistant Manager as the contact person for the project.

Sanders and Lewis prepared the information necessary for Select Systems' technical people. The hardware had been ordered and delivery was expected to be on time. However a delay was expected in the delivery of bar code scanners for the retail items. At this stage, Lewis felt that work was not progressing well and sent an email to the Vice-President of Hotel Operations to share his concerns. Lewis had hoped that such an email would help in addressing some of the major concerns prior to the arrival of the Select Systems team, besides distancing himself from the consequences.

After establishing the timeline for configuration, hardware and network testing, training and go-live, *Spa Select System* team members began the initial phase of project configuration. Sanders also updated them of some of the existing problems. For instance, both the Salon Manager and the Assistant Manager were not available in Las Vegas. The Assistant Manager had left a telephone number where she could be reached if any questions arose. Furthermore the Salon Manager and Assistant Manager were not expected to return for at least 2 days, which would significantly delay the configuration process. On the other hand the Spa Manager had struggled up to this point to get the detailed information for configuration and was not particularly interested in the Salon issues. She had made it very clear that Sanders and Lewis would have to manage the Salon situation on their own.

After consulting with the Spa Select support team, Sanders and Lewis decided to create a copy of the Paradise Bay Resort's database and install it on the Salon computer systems. This would help overcoming the risk of not having a properly configured information system for training, in case the configuration process was not completed according to schedule.

Upon the return of the Salon Manager and the Assistant Manager, there was still no sense of urgency to work on the project. Simple items, such as the billing paper, had not even been ordered

for the new system. Lewis had to place orders to ensure that the Salon had sufficient supplies prior to the go-live date. The Assistant Manager, Aurora, began the configuration work in earnest only 2 days prior to training. The configuration was eventually completed the night before training was scheduled to begin.

Although training began 2 weeks prior to the scheduled go-live date for the new system, this was not a significant amount of time due to the illiteracy of staff in the English language and lack of computer skills. Some employees adapted to the computer environment relatively well. However, others in the same class did not know how to use a mouse or, in some cases, how to spell key words. Given the slow progress, trainers from Select could not provide enough assistance to all users. This resulted in instituting an ad hoc "train the trainer" program. Essentially employees with more computer experience or who had already received the training were put in charge of the less competent.

Managers also had difficulty with training and grasping the new system. They did not understand why the system was needed in the first place, which resulted in conflicts and challenging the functionalities of the system. Due to the difficulty and frustration experienced during training, especially on part of those who were not computer literate, one of the Spa Assistant Managers and two employees tendered in their resignation. This created further problems, especially shortage of staff prior to the go-live date. The Spa Manager was now down to four employees and was only 1 week away from the implementation date. However, training proceeded as scheduled, albeit some of the employees were lagging behind. It soon became obvious that another trainer was required. Lewis went to the Vice-President of Hotel Operations and briefed her as to how the training was progressing. He suggested that another person should be brought in. On approval of the additional person by the Vice-President, *Spa Select System* sent another trainer to meet the needs prior to the go-live date.

Sanders could now turn his attention back to ensuring that the hardware and software was ready for the go-live date. Lewis scheduled meetings with the department heads to ensure their continued support. He also talked to the employees to judge their morale. Because of Lewis's inherent fear that someone might sabotage the project, he wanted to make sure that all employees had signed and agreed that they did not need any more training while the opportunity was there. The Spa and the Salon were very sensitive areas. They were servicing not only guests, but executives, including the CEO, and the Presidents' spouses as well. Many of the top executives went to the Spa or got their hair done at the Salon. Employees talking about not receiving enough training or discussing system problems could cause the project to be viewed as a failure and affect Sanders and Lewis's reputation.

Both Raymond Philips and Aurora had still not been trained on the system and the go-live date was in just 2 days. Lewis queried them on the training issue, but both stated that they had no intentions of learning the system and that if the receptionists knew how to operate it, everything should be fine. While Aurora knew how to configure some aspects of the system, she did not know how to operate it. This posed a big concern for Lewis, since it would be impossible for them to handle guest complaints or discrepancies, because neither Philips nor Aurora had enough know-how to maneuver through the screens, or to look up a reservation.

2.5. Implementation and go-live

Sanders was working on the system and configuring the user-computer interface of *Spa Select* to the Property Management System. *The Cactus* was the first property where the interface had been installed, so there were concerns that there may be some bugs to work out. However Sanders seemed confident that everything would go smooth with the interface. Since all computers,

printers, and software were in place and ready for go-live, Lewis sat back and reflected on the past 2 weeks, reviewing the timeline, and flowcharts to ensure that nothing had been overlooked. On reflection, Lewis felt that the whole conceptualization and implementation of the *Spa Select System* could have been handled better. Most certainly, if there had been good buy-in from the various organizational stakeholders, it would have been easier.

When the go-live day arrived, everything was set up and was in working order. The only hardware not in place was the scanners, however everyone was aware that the scanners would not be available. To remedy this situation, the system was temporarily configured so that employees could enter bar codes manually.

Spa Select provided two additional people to assist with the new software implementation and any questions that may arise. Besides Sanders and Lewis, the Spa Manager was also present but the Salon Manager and Assistant Manager were not in town. They had gone to San Diego and were not expected to be back for 2 days. The Salon handled the transition well, with some delays, since the receptionists and attendants were not familiar with the system. These problems were to be expected during any normal implementation and were anticipated to be solved over the next few days. Problems were also experienced with missing reservations. Further investigation suggested these to be largely because of human error. Employees however insisted that Spa Select was changing the location of services and that they were entering the data correctly. Other miscellaneous issues also arose, but nothing that had not been dealt with in the past. Lewis and Sanders had spoken to the Spa Manager earlier in the day and advised her that any problem or complaint that they received should be handled on priority. This was standard policy whenever implementing a new system and was considered part of the implementation cost. Overall, the supporting staff was pleased with how the first day was panning out for the new Spa system. Everyone had really worked hard to get employees trained the best they could, especially given the time constraints.

The Salon however was in a different situation. There was very poor communication between management, the receptionists, and the technicians who performed services for the guests. Technicians were accustomed to the manual system, where the receptionists would manually rotate customers to be sure that all technicians received an equal amount of business. This was crucial, since technicians in the Salon were paid on commission. The Salon staff were however not comfortable with the system of shuffling the appointments randomly to ensure that all technicians had an equal number of clients. The normal practice was to serve clients based on seniority and customer–technician preferences. The situation resulted in a lot of disgruntled employees and unhappy guests. Interestingly, no one from the top management was available to assist or manage the situation. With the Salon Manager and the Assistant Manager not being in town, technicians were telling executives, including the President and his wife, about the problems they were experiencing with the system and with the entire implementation process. This was putting everyone on guard. Lewis was getting calls from Chandler and the Vice-President of Hotel Operations, who in turn were attempting to find out the specifics.

Lewis and Stewart were left with no choice but to attempt to resolve the situation with the disgruntled employees. After hearing what their concerns were and what problems they were having, it seemed obvious to them that some of the issues were due to user error. However, employee earning could not be sacrificed due to such problems and because of lack of training. In the manual system the guests were scheduled to technicians by seniority. If a client canceled an appointment, the receptionist would erase the client name and shuffle them around to ensure that the highest seniority

would get the first customer. Select software, as stated previously, was intended for a Spa system initially and was being configured and enhanced to handle the Salon functionality. Select System was not capable of completely adapting the software according to the business requirements. The Salon rotation at *The Cactus* was configured in Spa Select primarily by seniority and second on a point scale. The configuration was set up so that people who had worked at *The Cactus* from 8 to 10 years had top seniority; 5 to 7 had the next level of seniority and so on. Within these seniority groups, appointments were distributed to the person with the least amount of points, until everyone in the group had a booking.

Lewis looked to the Paradise Club Salon for direction as far as how they handled the rotation issue. The Paradise Club managed rotation by allocating the next appointment to the person with the lowest dollar value reservation for a given day. This was the only restriction. Appointments were not juggled from one person to another for seniority reasons and everyone was given equal number of services. After discussions with Stewart, Lewis devised an alternative to assist those using the system so they could “manually” move appointments effectively by knowing who had the lowest “points”. Stewart and Lewis agreed they would have to do further work to improve the systems. The proposal however was to book clients in a similar manner to those handled at the Paradise Club. It was felt that this would promote good customer service, strong skills in the respective areas, and most importantly, improve the overall guest experience. Besides this would help the technicians increase their paycheck, since they were relying largely on repeated business.

Stewart and Lewis also agreed that all other appointments would be booked on a point system, based on financial value. Technicians who once relied on seniority to boost their earnings would now have to rely on good customer service and requests to achieve a higher financial value than their peers, since the earnings between technicians would be relatively flat with the exception of requests.

Lastly, a system enhancement was made to show the total number of points each technician had to facilitate smooth transitions when moving clients to other technicians. This alternative placed the focus back where it had to be, i.e. on the clients as opposed to the technicians. It also encouraged good customer service, which had always been the number one priority of *The Cactus*. However the technicians were resisting the change and the new processes of information handling. It seemed that they were not appreciative of the value that would be created or how it could benefit them. The situation only escalated because management was not available to assist dealing with employee issues.

After the first day of operating the system, Sanders, Lewis and the Select Support team went to dinner to discuss the daily activities and what needed to be done to improve the situation. A number of Salon related issues were raised, including those related to lack of supervision and the resultant aggravation. Problems with the interface were also brought up in the conversations. And there were concerns that the interface had never been checked since the system had gone live. Sanders assured everyone that this was not a problem and that the interface was working properly the day prior to the tests. Concerns were also raised about ‘posting codes’. This was another area that Sanders felt confident in, although Lewis knew this was something he had over looked. Sanders had extensive technology background but had neither been involved in the operational aspects nor in setting up the interface. The following day Lewis ran test transactions to ensure that there were no problems with the interface. After pulling up the transactions in the Property Management System, Lewis realized that the posting codes were wrong and that the interface had to be taken offline to fix these. While a fix such as this does not typically take a lot of time, other problems might ensue. Nevertheless, Sanders

agreed to take the interface offline to fix the errors and run further test.

Following this incident, Sanders began distancing himself from the project. Lewis knew he only had 2 days left with the trainers. The Salon Managers still had not returned from San Diego, but were expected the following day. Lewis realized that he was going to be at the Salon for a while until the receptionists could handle the system on their own. To attempt and facilitate a faster transition, Lewis began to write policies for the system and how to run required reports, close out at the end of the day, balance, etc. He also began writing policies for City Ledger account charging, cross-property charging, room charging, etc. Although Lewis knew the implementation did not go as well as it could have, he was pleased with the results, especially considering the time allowed and other difficulties. Lewis just hoped that the Salon Manager and the Assistant Salon Manager would be proactive in heading off the concerns of the employees when they returned.

3. Discussion

Although a significant amount of research has been published on information technology project success, the literature also presents many cases of failure in getting benefits from information technology investments (see for example Dhillon & Caldeira, 2008; Flowers, 1996; Pan, Hackney, & Pan, 2008; Sarker & Lee, 2003). This case study, although not involving very large and complex organizations, includes several interesting issues that must be analyzed and discussed. The case also presents interesting insights into the challenge of managing information effectively.

3.1. System success is a function of understanding information management requirements

An important issue presented in this case is that when implementing computer-based systems one must not assume that it is easy to extrapolate or adapt software to a different context. Although organizations may look similar, and able to use the same software, very simple business requirements may imply significant changes in the information handling processes and have a strong impact on the perceived success of a technology project (see for example Caldeira & Ward, 2002). Although the Salon was relatively less complex than the Spa, the software did not incorporate all the necessary business requirements and resulted in a situation where there was a lot of resistance to change. Moreover, the success at the Salon was critical for the perceived success of the Spa implementation. Since top executives and their wives were clients of the Salon, hairstylists and other technicians were in a privileged position to complain about the new system directly to the top management and their associates. They effectively had a strong political influence determinant to the perceived success of the project.

3.2. Benefits reside in making improvements in information management rather than just the technology

This is also a case of resistance to change and fear of the unknown (see Keen, 1981; Markus, 1983). In the literature, such “social dramas” have been well studied. McFarland (2004) for instance calls for special attention to these disruptive actions, since they offer an opportunity to transform an organization. While this may be true, any change has to make sense to the stakeholders in terms of benefits it might deliver (Dhillon, 2005). With respect to technology implementation, when the managers heard the word “computer”, they did not care what the benefits would be, since they were intimidated by the thought of using computers. Researchers have termed such behavior as “computer anxiety”

(Igbaria & Chakrabarti, 1990) and have even proposed mechanisms for dealing with it.

3.3. Stakeholder involvement is critical in ensuring good information management

Although resistance to change is common to technology projects, it is normally a major problem when the project is not properly managed or there is lack of top management support (Caldeira & Ward, 2003; Markus, 1983). Markus (1983) suggests that people will resist a software application when the costs outweigh the perceived benefits. If the system is badly designed and implemented (and project management has a critical influence on these issues) and there is lack of top management involvement, to put pressure on users to use the system, people will resist the implementation. Their benefits (quality of work, importance inside the organization, etc.) are affected and they do not feel any pressure to use the system. This is clear in the *Spa Select System* case, where both Salon Manager and Assistant Manager were not involved in the project and not even physically present in the Salon when the system went live. They were also not involved in the key issues related to information management.

3.4. Central to good information management is managing user expectations

Users' expectations are an important factor affecting the perceived benefits arising from the use of new software systems (Staples, Wong, & Seddon, 2002). Users must see their own personal interests when a new system is being implemented. These interests could be a reduction in the amount of work, increase in the quality of the service provided, or gaining power within the organization. However, benefits must be communicated effectively. As Sarker and Lee (2003) note, communication issues are central to the success of an enterprise system. Expectations at every level should be communicated (Nah, Lau, & Kuang, 2001). Ward and Daniel (2004) suggest running a benefit management approach, parallel to project management, to identify potential benefits of the new computer systems to the shareholders of the organization and to assure that those benefits will occur. If users do not expect any benefit from the adoption of a new technology or are afraid of being negatively impacted, for example losing power, resistance to change must be expected.

3.5. Information management involves careful design of roles and responsibilities

Resistance behaviors can vary from apathy, passive resistance, active resistance, or to engaging in aggressive behavior (see Coetsee, 1999; Lapointe & Rivard, 2005). With a lot of assistance, the Spa Manager made it through the transition and worked to adapt to the implementation and how information was handled. One negative aspect of this situation was that she was so caught up in her own concerns that she forgot to properly address her employees. This resulted in some of them leaving, since they were as scared as she was. Furthermore, the employee compensation structure changed, leading to disgruntled employees.

3.6. Process improvement facilitates adequate information management

Business benefits from IT adoption are important for organizations (Dhillon, 2005; Peppard, Ward, & Daniel, 2007) but also are the personal interest of employees. Managing business process changes and the individual interests of the “actors” involved

in the organization is critical for the successful adoption of information technology (see, e.g., Sarker, Sarker, & Sidorova, 2006). Resistance to change for the technicians in the salon was due to an inability of many to use computers but also the fact that users' benefits were affected. This case shows that looking for vested interests and hidden agendas is critical to manage a technology project. An information management project is also a political project because it affects, or is likely to affect, users and other stakeholders' perceived benefits. Moreover, it is important to consider the inter-relationship between user skills (and not only computer skills, for example some of the user were not completely fluent in English) and individual benefits. Many times the phenomenon of "computer anxiety" emerges. In other cases poor systems design or implementation and lack of user skills are essentially excuses for not adopting a system that is not perceived as bringing any significant benefits to its users.

3.7. Governance is an important ingredient of information management. It ensures proper controls and ownership structures

In this case, lack of support from top management also resulted in reduced ownership of the system. This type of situation is frequently referred to in the information systems literature (see, Somers & Nelson, 2002; Thong, Yap, & Raman, 1996). When the new system went live, key managers were not present. The Salon Manager was not much interested in the system either. This became obvious as the implementation progressed, particularly when the employees stated that Select System was inadequate in all aspects as it related to their jobs. Such actions are not unrealistic and have been noted elsewhere in the literature. Devinatz (2007) for instance, while studying managerial control comments on the

rationalizing of the irrational controls. Salon technicians did not want the system, so they demanded unrealistic expectations of it, as indicated by their requests for system rotation.

4. Conclusion

The case study presented in this paper is yet another case of information technology failure, albeit the implementation was limited in scope. The case also illustrates a lack of concern for the management of information and social issues related with information management. The literature has usually focused on large-scale implementations where there are a number of stakeholders and change initiatives are generally broad in scope. However, even in a limited Spa and Salon setting, projects can go wrong and implications for the business can be significant. Clearly by focusing on business processes, project management and organizational change management, it is possible to contain the chances of failure. In order to gain benefits from technology investments it is important to address all stakeholders interests, including employees, and a significant top management commitment to the project, not only in words but also in actions. Moreover, there is a significant relationship between user skills and perceived individual benefits. Unfeasible functional systems requests or lack of computer skills can be a way to resist or adopt a system. Reflecting back on this implementation there were many areas where improvements could have been made.

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Appendix B.

Salon Flow Chart



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