

Implementation of groupware



After realizing that the implementation of groupware should be evolutionary and all challenges and hurdles should be addressed earlier; the main goal - during the introduction or pre-implementation phase- should be creating the right environment for the change to groupware and managing this change. So, the three most important requirements in this transition phase could be: (1) top management support, (2) creating the ' collaboration' and ' sharing' culture and teamwork, and (3) empowerment and support of the groupware users.

Of course -according to Sikkel & Ruel & Wieringal (1999)- these requirements are going to change during the later implementation of groupware. However, without these requirements, the implementation of the entire project -as mentioned previously- could be postponed or even canceled. Because when it comes to groupware, it is not only about infrastructure and technology, it is also about people, culture, and politics. People -according to Hills (2005)- " are the hardest and important thing in implementing groupware and failing to deal with people issues could cause the failure of the project".

That's why the introduction or pre-implementation phase has got more attention in both research and practice. The most important reason behind the necessity of top management support is using a political tool that could influence, motivate employees, and decrease their resistance toward groupware and collaborative work. Especially, when this resistance to change can slow the implementation of the groupware system, minimize potential benefits, or even fail the whole project.

A very interesting finding concerning the success and failure of groupware-supported BPR process in organizations showed that “ the key difference between successful and unsuccessful cases was when and how senior management was involved” (Dennis & Carte & Kelly, 2003, p. 31) Then, the continuous assessment of results and measuring the intangible benefits could be the best way to guarantee leadership and top management support to the groupware project. Creating the ‘ collaboration’ and ‘ sharing’ culture and teamwork will pave the way and prepare employees to accept collaborative work.

“ The corporate culture must either be ready for groupware or adapt itself to address the cultural premises of groupware” (Wallace, 1997, p. 48). Orlikowski (1992) did hit the bottom line by describing the situation -of introducing groupware to an organization without any preparation for collaborative work- “ as devising a game plan for a game you never played before” (p. 8) The step of preparing employees to work within teams should be taken before starting to implement groupware systems. Then, the groupware system could be implemented gradually starting with a single department for example.

This change of the organizational culture will -for sure- minimize employees’ resistance to use groupware systems. The empowerment and support of the groupware users could be achieved through (1) adopting a communication policy by which (a) users will realize goals needed to be achieved from using these groupware systems, (b) any employees’ fears will be eliminated and potential personal and organizational benefits will be realized and (c) users will feel that the system is theirs they owe it and even

participate in planning and decision making -Hills (2005) also recommended that it should be “ the user’s project-.

Through this ongoing communication, expectations could be managed and resistance could be reduced. This empowerment could also be achieved through (2) training users to understand the new technology, and (3) providing support to users. According to Hills (2005), “ it is crucial for employees to know that the organization is implementing groupware to help them and support them. Groupware will only succeed if employees are willing to use it and if they feel that they have the organization’s support”.

Support doesn’t only mean technical support it also means adopting some structural enhancements or modifications such as “ new rewards system and new policies and procedures” recommended by Orlikowski (1992). Then after accepting the new culture and the new system, other requirements could emerge such as technological and managerial enhancements. For example, some technologies such as “ digital thread technology, digital signature, version history, and merging technologies” (Miller, 2005) should be taken into considerations when it comes to implementing groupware systems.

But again as mentioned before these -previously mentioned- three requirements are the most crucial requirements for successful effective implementation and use of groupware applications during the introduction of the system into the organization. Finally, it is obvious that the main factor, that leads to a successful implementation of groupware, is the “ full participation and engagement of the business” (Jahnke, A., 2004).

Or in another word, to melt the whole business into what Brynjolfsson, E. (2003) called ‘ the digital organization’ . In brief, when best practices is <https://assignbuster.com/omplementation-of-groupware/>

added to the equation (alignment IT portfolio management) during the planning phase, an IT governance framework is adopted, along with these requirements mentioned previously, the success of the groupware project could be guaranteed.

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