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Inputs are the physical objects or information that goes into a system. For example, for a mobile service provider, they sell mobile handsets to compliment their mobile services. The mobile phones which they purchase from the supplier are inputs to the system of the mobile service provider. A customer who wishes to sign up for a mobile plan and purchase mobile handset gives their personal information so that the mobile service providers can bill them. For the mobile service provider, these are inputs from customers to the system.

The system of the mobile service provider is as below: Inside the system for providing mobile phone services, there are many subsystems that chain together to make the whole system functioning. For example, The Customer Service department have front desk officers to help answer queries/tackle complaints from customers who walk into the retail shop. They also have a call center that receives calls from customers. All these complaints, suggestions are then channeled into a central database which is available to all the staffs of the company.

Commonly asked questions will then be uploaded to the Mobile Service Provider's website by the Customer Service Department so that they are readily available as FAQs on their homepage. From the example, although the Customer Service Department is part of the system to ensure smooth delivery of mobile handsets and mobile services, we can see that it is in fact a system by itself to categorize complains and feedbacks, to channel the required information to the respective departments via the database system and to ensure that commonly asked questions are loaded into the web.

If we blow up the Customer Service group (as below), you'll notice that it functions as a system in its own right. Outputs are the physical objects and services that are utilized by the customer. In the scenario of the Mobile Service Provider, the tangible ones are the mobile handset, the mobile service and the intangible ones are like product information and clarifications of customer's queries. An interesting thing to note is that there are outputs from one subsystem to another subsystem which will receive them as inputs in order to make the whole system functioning.

Sometimes, we refer to those who receive outputs from another subsystem in a system itself as internal customer. Example, the Product Development group will receive new service concepts from the Marketing group. They will then develop the service and then promote it to the Operations Group to put the service into actual liveenvironment. In the example, we can see that the Product Development group are receiving inputs from the Marketing Group and producing outputs to the Operations Group. In all, most subsystems have lots of inputs and outputs relationship between themselves as they work together to ensure that the system is functioning.

Having specialized functional area helps to promote a focus for work, promotes professionalism and allow expertise to grow. This is crucial as it greatly enhances the performance of the functional area. For example, the IS development team in the organization I'm in are specialized to take in our requirements and develop them into a working system. They are highly efficient and meet 98% of the request and deliver them on time. The whole team is closely knit together such that when a proposal is technically not

possible, they are able to give better recommendations or alternatives that suit the requirement.

On the other hand, they are highly oblivious to some of the concerns of the team. Some of their solutions are difficult to implement and requires tremendous amount of effort and manpower. For example, there was a request for them to configure the system such that the Retail and Sales group can capture an important data required for a unified messaging service. The data was to be collated and then send to Marketing group for evaluation. Instead of coding the program such that the data is sent automatically to the Marketing group, the Retail staff has to manually send it via email.

This result in information not send on time as the staff tasked to do it has forgotten. When feed backed, the IS development group aggress that it can be done but they insist that the staff should send manually. It was only after much persuasion and getting the Retail Group's director to personally endorse it that IS development did the changes. Such issues are common and it boils down to the fact that they do not understand concerns and the working environment of the other groups. This waste a lot of time, frustrate the team and leaves a bad taste in both the IS group and Retail and Sales group.