

Management information systems final paper

[Business](#), [Management](#)



I am proposing a plan for an Information Technology personnel expansion to Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. versus a specific Information Technology system to be implemented companywide. Acorda has good information technology systems in place throughout the areas that directly impact the field sales organization. However, Acorda does not have enough personnel within its IT department to support all of the areas within the company that are in need. This has been more evident and is especially true since Acorda doubled the outside field sales team from fifty sales representatives to 100 sales representatives.

I would like to outline a plan to triple the head count within our IT department from three to ten employees. From my perspective, as an employee of the company, Acorda has a large gap between business personnel and IT personnel. According to our book, *Business Driven Information Systems*, “ One of the greatest challenges today is effective communication between business personnel and IT personnel. ” (Phillips, p. 15) Acorda has great programs and systems in place, but when organizations IT department is understaffed, even the best IT initiatives implemented continuously fall short.

Acorda has various departments that depend on specific information to function. Acorda has an information-sharing culture. “ Information-sharing culture is employees trusting each other to use information (especially about problems and failures) to improve performance. (Phillips, p. 13) I believe that the culture has remained this way due to the nature of it being such a small biotechnology company. The organization has around two hundred and fifty

employees. The book explains that the gap is due to the difference in vocabulary between business personnel and IT personnel.

I believe that there are not enough people within IT to communicate even the basics effectively within an efficient timeframe and this creates a poor performance on their behalf. My proposal of increasing the IT department staff from three to ten people would help to ease the flow of basic information to all departments within Acorda from sales and marketing to accounting. Currently, if a field sales representative experiences an IT related issue with anything, it can take days for someone within IT to get back to the representative. Creating a dedicated IT helpdesk that is open from nine A.

M. to 5 P. M. Eastern Time, would be very helpful. The current system has an individual submit an IT request ticket through the company's VPN, and days later someone will contact the representative at a random time when you may or may not be near your computer. There are many issues surrounding this "request ticket" methodology. Typically, if an individual is requesting for help from IT, it is something important. Field representatives have blackberry's, laptop computers, printers and numerous programs with the computer to assist us with everything.

Some of the computer programs are for expense reporting, field sales reports, call reporting, ordering marketing materials, and physician data. A great example of a need from a field sales representative is when the VPN is down, it does not allow them access to programming to be able to complete anything. If it takes days for someone to assist with this request, that

individual in the field has lost days of functioning effectively within their respective territory. It would be much more functional to have a dedicated IT helpdesk to call and get immediate assistance with whatever the need is.

I have worked at several other companies, and they have all had dedicated IT helpdesks available with extended hours. Acorda would benefit immensely with its field sales force by allowing them to be fully restored and functional immediately. In doing this, that representative is much more productive quicker. In allowing a representative to have their issues resolved fast, they can proceed to do what they do best; sell. When a representative is out in territory selling, everyone within the organization benefits because they are generating revenue and profits. Business is about making profit and being successful.

Too often IT personnel are left out of strategy meetings because of the belief that they do not understand business so they will not add value. Working together, business and IT personnel have the potential to create competitive advantages, reduce costs, and streamline business processes. " (Phillips, p. 16) The most expensive permanent solution would be to hire IT technicians directly. In researching this, the cost range per employee would be fifty thousand dollars per year with no experience to one hundred and twenty thousand dollars per year with twenty years experience. [www. payscale. com](http://www.payscale.com))

The average salary for IT techs, with five years experience is would be seventy five thousand dollars per person per year. Three IT techs to work the helpdesk would be two hundred and twenty five dollars for salary alone. The

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cost for the seven total would be five hundred and twenty five thousand dollars for salary alone. Once benefits are added, this number would be close to seven hundred thousand dollars. The option of adding employees directly is by far the most expensive; very costly.

Some of the advantages of having the IT technicians be direct employees of Acorda would be having the ability to select who was hired and at what experience level, potentially have less turnover, develop relationships with the technicians, and overall stability within the organization which may lead to loyalty to the company. Some of the disadvantages of hiring IT technicians directly are; the cost, actually developing the helpdesk within the IT department, time to get the prospective employees hired and trained, establishing roles within the department, and time to get the IT helpdesk functioning effectively.

Another option in creating an IT helpdesk at Acorda is outsourcing the entire project. There are a plethora of companies on the internet that can handle this need for an organization, regardless of the size of the company. “ Providing quality helpdesk solutions is the heart of ABS’ business. By rendering prompt, responsive answers to your end0users’ IT challenges, ABS gets them back to work quickly. How we interact with your organization depends on your needs. ” (www. abs-inc. com) Unfortunately, I was unable to get pricing on this option.

I am assuming that it would be a contract between Acorda and ABS, but I am unaware of just how much it would cost. I am sure that a contract such as this would be quite expensive, not sure if it would cost seven hundred

thousand dollars per year. Some of the advantages of outsourcing are; immediately ready to implement, potential cost savings, and being in a contract. Some of the potential disadvantages are; being in a contract with a lousy provider, employee turnover within the contracted agency, and overall accountability. “ An organization needs to maximize its profits, enlarge its market share, and restrain its ever increasing costs. (Philips, p. 419) Also, according to the book, Business Driven Information Systems, Businesses need to make every effort to rethink and adopt new processes especially regarding insourcing and outsourcing.

Also, the book states that sixty percent of functions outsourced are Information Technology. (Philips, p. 420) “ Information technology outsourcing enables organizations to keep up with market and technology advances – with less strain on human and financial resources and more assurance that the IT infrastructure will keep pace with evolving business priorities. (Phillips, p. 420) I believe that the most effective solution that upper management at Acorda Therapeutics, Inc. could implement to ease the organizations overall IT burdens would be to outsource the expansion of our IT department and the IT helpdesk. In hiring an outside agency to handle this need, Acorda could function more effectively and efficiently. The overall cost savings by outsourcing has to be quite substantial. Also, outsourcing would allow the organization to stay on the cutting edge of all new IT solutions and strategies.

I truly wish Acorda would consider doing this. The ripple effect that expanding our IT department and creating a dedicated helpdesk would have

throughout the organization could be profound. Overall, Acorda could operate with such ease from sales, marketing, accounting, and supply chain management. As an outside field sales representative, I would be very pleased regarding the overall positive impact the IT expansion would have directly related to my position. I am sure that my colleagues feel the same way too.