

# Midsouth chamber of commerce

[Business](#), [E-Commerce](#)



As the years continued the responsibility of the MASC. shifted from supporting the area's economy by providing transportation to including many other issues such as state banking laws, industrial development and business taxes. By the mid 1980's the MASC., led by President Jack Wellingtons was known as an aggressive advocacy group for the business community. Unfortunately, because of the closures of large manufacturers in the area, bursting of the internet bubble and economic downshift Wellingtons found himself in a \$330,000 deficit by 2001.

Something needed to be done and done quickly; he needed someone to lead the sales and marketing of his company, thus came Leon Leister. Leon Leister and his 12 years of experience came to the company as Vice President of Marketing and Membership. He spent his first few months performing a thorough investigation of programs and processes within the company. He had his solutions which included a restructure of the sales and marketing departments, a more robust information system that could handle many more activities which in turn would decrease labor costs and increase efficiency and hiring of a full time systems analyst.

He proposed this plan to his colleague, De Wilson and unfortunately he did not agree. Wilson felt the costs for an information technology upgrade would not be possible at this time. Even though Leister and Wilson did not always see eye to eye, they finally came together and brainstormed ideas about revenue producing opportunities. For these opportunities to be possible they would need to upgrade their information technology and hire a system's analyst. Simon Kopecks was hired.

He was fresh out of school and did not have any experience in accounting or working with a membership organization as this, yet Wilson hired him.

Kopecks struggled to learn the organization and its imputer systems, but pushed through while Wilson managed him. By 2005, MASC. was among the largest chambers of commerce In the state. Both Wilson and Leister recognized Its growth and financial strength and believed that Information systems could play a huge role In the continued success of the company. Shortly after, the Board requested a reorganization of the company.

Leister was tasked with Vice President of Finance was given responsibility for research, Controller's functions and computer operations. Wilson was asked to focus on his public affairs efforts until retirement. Kopecks was disappointed that he was not promoted to oversee the computer systems as he had a background in Information Technology and Hedges did not. He mentioned to Leister that Hedges' attention was focused on his other responsibilities and the information systems area was essentially being ignored.

Leister agreed with Kopeck's assessment and moved forward investigating a small company, UNITARY which developed a software suite he felt would meet the current and future needs of MASC.. In November 2005, he introduced the product to the management group and received agreement except from Kopecks who felt there were mom weaknesses in the system. He then presented his proposal to the Board and was approved to purchase the product. In February 2006, Leister was disappointed to find out that the product was still not purchased.

When he approached his team, Hedges stated he had been busy with research and Kopecks stated that there had been no approval from Hedges so didn't pursue it. Leister took it upon himself to make sure the product was ordered. Another month went by and Leister found out the product was still not implemented, Kopecks was too busy with another project and was not able to get to it until mid-April. Leister needed to get things moving; after all he told the Board it would be completed by the end of March 2006.

He took some steps for action, called a meeting to inform his staff, set up appointments with UNITARY for training himself and staff, yet the project continued to lag and Leister had no choice but to ask Wellingtons to intervene. He strongly urged Hedges and Kopecks toward completion of the project. Gaps in the system continued, not only did the staff complain about the software not being user friendly, UNITARY openly admitted the software was new and that they were open to adjustments and hinges, that did not give the staff any confidence.

More problems came about when Kopecks attempted to transfer the information from the old system to the new and was unsuccessful. Leister was at his wits end, sat down and let out a loud sigh. Many issues have been brought forth in this case study. I believe that I would propose the following actions to the Executive Board. First I would propose role modification changes. A Chief Information Officer (CIO) position would be created and Leister would be the right candidate for it. " Value is created where IT is pushed together with business" (Austin, et al, 2009).

He has a strong hold on the new system and this role allows integrating information systems into every area of the business. This position would come second in line under the President on the organization chart. In my opinion, Willow's role should be kept intact and Kopecks should report directly to him, not to Hedges. This would allow Wilson to continue his public affairs projects, allow Kopecks to take the lead of the Information systems and be mentored into Willow's role when he retires. Wilson does not have the experience about information technology however, Kopecks does.

And vice versa, Kopecks doesn't know the business and legislative side but Wilson does, it becomes a balance. Hedges should continue with finance and take on the Controller's responsibilities as planned. When dealing with UNITARY, Leister took the wrong route. First and foremost, he did not involve the management team in choosing the product. The team in its entirety investment as it relates to each of their areas. Second, the company chosen was small and just starting up, not a good choice especially because Leister was such a novice in this capacity.

It would have been a wise choice to have Kopecks as a sounding board. Leister ran into problems because he did not perform due diligence in researching the company. It seemed the contract negotiation was unclear regarding support of the system, and even the capabilities of the system itself. Hollering states, " Problems can arise from use of third-party vendors due to insufficient planning and oversight of the vendor" (2005). MASC. also exposed itself to transaction, litigation and compliance risk when UNITARY

did not deliver the expected product because of poor performance or technological failure.

Purchasing and adopting new information technology can make your company much more refutable and efficient. In the future Leister should assess the culture of the organization at the time of change. He must also assess the employees and their personalities as end users. It will not only be the higher level team members who will be involved in the use of this new system, there are end users that need to understand it and feel comfortable with it for the company to be successful in its use.

Next, Leister should develop a project time line which will help keep the team organized and on task. When searching for a new system, due diligence is crucial. It s also important to have the resources available meaning finances and experts. The financial aspect was covered, the Board had approved it, but an expert such as Kopecks should be part of investigating specific companies to determine which vendor will meet the needs of MASC.. Leister and his team must limit his choices to the top three contenders then set up a time for each of them to present their product.

It is imperative to include end users in the demonstration to allow for feedback. Once the product is chosen contract negotiation begins. The vendor and team will meet to discuss specifics and write up the agreement. The contract should e specific in the product and its capabilities, the installation and set-up, training and ongoing support and upgrades. In conclusion the recommendations are as follows: 1 Change in organization chart to include new position CIO and movement of IT analyst under the CIO,

and role modification within the other positions. . ) Establish a team to develop and clarify capabilities, train and implement the UNITARY or terminate the contract and start anew. 3. ) Assess culture and readiness of organization to adopt new information technology, attain resources such as finances and experts, develop a meaningful team , prepare a project time line and monastery due diligence in selecting the new system. Technology plays a crucial role in today's business world.