

Project management and strategic planning - case study -- [s6]

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Project Management & Strategic Planning Case Study [Pick the What are some key differences between the JetBlue and WestJet software implementations?

The striking differences between the implementations at both airlines are that of a backup plan, prior communication with stakeholders and measures taken to counter contingency situations arising from business continuation while adopting the new software. These three differentiating factors made WestJet's implementation a disaster as compared to JetBlue's successful endeavor. JetBlue learned from the mistakes of WestJet and made necessary arrangements in all three aspects. No matter what project management methodology we consider; it is evident that major steps in strategic planning phase went missing; steps such as estimation of resource requirements, risk planning and communication with all stakeholders. Furthermore in monitoring and controlling phase business continuity was not planned hence the WestJet implementation took more time and cost along and resulted in customer dissatisfaction.

Estimation of resources such as time, people and money ensures a better execution, through risk planning all the related risk factors to the project are estimated with risk prevention and mitigation plans while communication with all stakeholders including customers ensures business continuation in an effective way and clarifying roles and responsibilities (Charvat, 2002).

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of communicating a major project in advance?

Effective communication prior to a project initiation determines the information and communication needs of the stakeholders resulting in better understanding of responsibilities and tasks distribution as well as clarifying the expectations from them. It results in formation of a cohesive team resulting in a better performance later on and initiates a change management process within the organization. Increased level of awareness invites ideas from employees and customers and ensures readiness of all involved parties.

Some disadvantages to communicating a major project in advance include wasted time of project managers in communicating with stakeholders, revealed plans to competitors most of the time triggering a reaction, increased level of suspicion amongst the employees and confusion within customers. Communicating major projects in advance, the project manager has to emphasize on explaining each stakeholder the specific value addition for them (Green, 2007).

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of adjusting business volume during a major business project?

With volumes sales go down and decreased revenue is not considered good for even an organization in its transition or up-gradation. Along with the unavailability of seats or canceled flights it was essential that both airlines convey the positive message maintaining the trust of the customer and the stakeholder. The load test of implemented software is not effective until and unless full load is not tested, while prolonged implementation of software with sheer dependency can result in decreased revenues until the project is successfully closed.

Meanwhile a lesser load on the system ensures stability and serves as a beta test, by adjusting the volumes companies provide time to their human resources for getting acquainted with the new software and hardware, it gives them time to train their employees, take their feedback and remove the errors.

In order to handle the situation without much adjustment to the volumes, it is recommended that a parallel manual system or previous software should be present as an alternative to the airline employees if the new software crashes.

4. Beyond not being the first firm to implement a particular piece of software, what other more general lessons apply for software implementation?

The initial phase of project management should be taken seriously; backup plans for arising failures or contingent situations should be in place with risk assessments and overall better estimation of resources. Experience of other companies with similar product should be studied, a 'well done' approach should be preferred over 'just getting over with it' approach. Prior communication is an equally vital factor ensuring fewer disruptions along with enhanced involvement and trust of leadership. During the testing and implementation phase after proper estimations sales volume can be decreased in order to ensure continuity of business while users get familiarize with the system. Data migration process should be initiated prior to the start of the project ensuring that an alternate data source is available for parallel execution using the old software.

References:

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