Basic requirements for effective implementation and use of groupware

Groupware may lead to an organizational evolution, however -at the same time- it could be a potential political intrusion. Because it " changes the way an organization works and communicates". (Wallace, 1997, p. 48) And this is –according to Wallace (1997)- what makes it " more difficult for people to become comfortable and productive" (p. 48). These applications " can be so hard that some organizations have simply opted to postpone implementing it until they've reengineered their processes, reorganized into teams, and solved their organizational issues.

" (Hill, 2005)That's why " its introduction must be smooth and it must be more ' group friendly' than mainframe systems have been" (Grudin, 1994). This essay aims at discussing the three most important things a company can do to effectively implement and use groupware systems during the introduction phase of the groupware project to the organization. First of all, groupware systems –by their nature- belong to IT projects category. Hence, it is better to realize the reality of these projects. According to Needmuchwala, [2008] " 41% of IT projects failed to deliver the expected value and more than ?

Of IT projects were canceled" (p. 3) This reality can show an important fact that success of IT systems in general and groupware in specific doesn't only depend on purchasing and plugging these systems into an organization. There are some hurdles to be overcome such as the " technological, organizational and cultural obstacles that stand in the way of implementation" (Saugatuck, 2007, p. 3) Orlikowski (1992) focused on groupware –Notes- while discussing this issue and divided the

implementation requirements into cognitive and organizational or structural elements.

Before discussing the ' implementation' of groupware, it is important to understand that implementation is only a phase in the groupware project life cycle. This phase couldn't be separated from its previous phase which is ' planning'. and if this phase was successful and was done collaboratively by both top management and IT department and between the organization and the consulting company, taking into consideration (1) aligning this plan with the business strategy and (2) addressing all future possible hurdles or challenges; then, the ' implementation phase' will be easier than with a weak plan. Read about Evolution of Job Design

Based on the strategicgoalsand requirements specified in the planning phase, the selection decision could be determined. Now, after selecting the right groupware solution -based on the business requirements- and armed with an aligned strategic plan along with its action plan (costs, time-table of the implementation, performance measurements..); Then, it is the ' transition', ' introduction' or even ' pre-implementation' phase. And this phase is what we are going to focus on because it is the most crucial phase upon which success orfailureof the groupware project will be determined.

If the main obstacles or hurdles -considered at the ' planning' phase- were properly addressed, a lot of resistance and risk will be avoided in the future. Sikkel & Ruel & Wieringal (1999) recommended an evolutionary implementation approach of groupware systems which was a logical result of the fact that " groupware requirements are hard to elicit and keep changing before, during and after the introduction of the system" (p. 1). This approach

is to take "(1) organizationalenvironment, (2) software design, and (3) the interplay between them" into consideration before implementing these projects. (p. 2)