Project failure essay

The failure and withdrawal of the clinical system from The new south Wales project in 1996 was an unfortunate yet an eye opener to organization implementing complex system like the NSW project. The NSW shows areas of incompatibility in their implementation strategy. The case study vividly outlines and fits into the sculpture of the theories of failure outlined by Saucer [1996] and Lyytinen and Hirschheim[1987].

Saucer's theory of failure emphasis on failure due to different perspectives from different users, it stresses the need to balance 3 keys factors; system, supporters and social organizations. Links to lack of some of these key elements in the strategy is evident in the case of the NSW, which will be discussed in detail later in the report. Lyytinen and Hirschheim [1987] failure theory on the other hand categories failure in 3 different facets being interaction correspondence and process failure. All these failures appear in the NSW implementation process. Having said that, it is without doubt that the ideas of these failure theories greatly explain certain ideas in the case study. System incapability with intended usersThe initial system of the NSW clearly did not meet its user's requirement, which in turn led to a correspondence failure. The degree in which employees take part in the implementation development is very important. Clinicians resisted the system because they felt that it did not perform any relevant work for them and hardly matched with their roles.

There was also a process failure in NSW project because the sites were insisting change to suit their needs where as the central control was being reluctant to allow such changes to occur. The process failure occurred in the form of delay and these many changes resulted in and a budget-blow out

which is a form of a process failure too. It is clear that with such misfit between strategy and the decentralized structure, correspondence or interaction failure and eventually a process failure was inevitable because the system was too deficient for the use of its intended users.

Stakeholders There is evidence of an imbalance in the dependency triangle[saucer , 1996] the system which was being put in place did not have a strong project rganization, there was great conflict of interests within the organization due to a multiple stake holders. It was very difficult to make decisions about the system that was suitable for all the stakeholders. The syst The introduction of an IS to an organisation brings about many changes in working patterns, organisational structure, job descriptions and so on. As Bostrom and Heinen argue " one cannot install new technology without considering the people who must work with it" (Bostrom and Heinen, 1977). Therefore a socio-technical philosophy has to be adopted while dealing with IS. " The decision to select a PAS/OCS, which did not meet the requirements of the sites, led to a correspondence failure.

Three incompatibilities militated in favor of the decision. First, the centralized strategy required a system to ensure its viability while the decentralized structure meant that the selection team felt that it was not responsible for the interests of the sites—sites were not forced to pilot. Second, the inclusion of sites in the contracting process reinforced this feeling. Third, the fact that the funding was externally sourced and hence that the selection team would not bear any financial cost of an adverse outcome may have encouraged the selection team to take more of a risk

than had they been directly accountable. The configuration created a difficult situation for central IT.

The strategy was driven by the ISSC consisting of Area and site managers, yet central IT remained a part of the Department of Health. The possibility of acknowledging that the system did not meet requirements and aborting the tender was made particularly difficult because this would have undermined the strategy. The incompatibility between strategy and structure also militated against a more consulta- tive selection process because it implied a high time-cost for a negotiated settlement between central and site interests.