Enterprise Analysis & Modelling

Big-Bang ERP Implementation

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Abstract

It has been noticed that a trade-off between scalability and susceptibility is present in the ERP or Enterprise Resource planning is an important tool to integrate business and management practices with the latest technology. Managing data from a single point reduces the problems of synchronization and reduces the overall complexity of an enterprise. A good ERP exactly replicates the functional needs of the organization (Fiona Fui-Hoon Nah, 2006). However, when going for an ERP implementation it is highly important to evaluate the critical success factors only then can the actual success can be monitored and tracked. This report focuses on discussing such critical success factors (Corbett, 2007) with a view of highlighting the outcomes of the decisions made and some problems that could have been avoided. The critical success factors for discussion are

1. The Organizational strategy
2. The Enterprise analysis
3. The system Evaluation
4. Change management and Risk issues

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Executive Summary:

DSW as a growing firm decides to have SAR ERP implemented in a Big-Bang approach. This approach is quite different from the parallel approach where both old and new systems work in parallel until a level of comfort and satisfaction is obtained. Opting for a Big-bang way carries its own risks. DSW takes some important steps in this regard, starting from devising a strategy at the Organizational level to monitor the change well. Properly time-lined methods for enterprise analysis, proper team formation to resolve conflicts well in time, good initiatives to foster a feeling of need-to-change in the organization by gaining up worker confidence. DSW takes some important decisions with regard to the level of customization which has its own positive as well as negative impacts in the end. In the end, with some glitches the project gets completed well before time and within budget.

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Introduction:

ERP or Enterprise Resource planning is an important tool to integrate business and management practices with the latest technology. Managing data from a single point reduces the problems of synchronization and reduces the overall complexity of an enterprise. A good ERP exactly replicates the functional needs of the organization (Fiona Fui-Hoon Nah, 2006). However, when going for an ERP implementation it is highly important to evaluate the critical success factors only then can the actual success can be monitored and tracked. This report focusses on discussing such critical success factors (Corbett, 2007) with a view of highlighting the outcomes of the decisions made and some problems that could have been avoided. The critical success factors for discussion are

Commented [A2]: Topic introduced and defined with appropriate reference

1. The Organizational strategy
2. The Enterprise analysis
3. The system Evaluation
4. Change management and Risk issues

Organizational strategy:

When opting for a robust ERP implementation, the organizational strategy plays a very crucial role. Each industry has its own uniqueness and needs. It is important for the stakeholders to recognize the core business needs and separate them from the subsidiary needs. The aim of the implementation should be to enhance the business and not limit the capabilities. Effective project management is the key to success of the implementation. It includes activities like measuring the requirements of the projects, planning the various stages, assigning the responsibilities to the

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stakeholders involved, deciding on a method to manage the stakeholders, their training and progress monitoring. Some important steps include

- Clearly define the scope of the ERP implementation
- The milestones should be preplanned
- A thorough check of the material, resource and financial needs of the project needs to be done.
- As it would be a multi-party involvement, strategies need to be devised to coordinate efforts across them and managing the timeline (Remus, 2007), resources and risk involved in all.

Such an implementation would also call for an efficient Business process re-engineering (BPR) (S Parthasarathy, 2007). A properly executed BPR brings about the necessary structural changes and also does a feasibility study.

Commented [A3]: Very well explained

The organization DSW went ahead with some significant re-engineering plans like

- Conversion of hardware from host-centric to a network-centric nature
- Adopting modern software infrastructure
- Supporting the transition from a single-firm outlook to a multi-firm outlook
- Dropping the idea of Y2K conversion, rather opting to implement a Y2K compliant ERP system.
- Abandoning of plans to update the old existing systems
- Taking ERP implementation as a competitive opportunity as many of the DSW competitors had already gone for it.

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These BPR steps provided a good base for a proper ERP implementation and ensured a smooth landing ahead.

Enterprise Analysis:

For a good ERP implementation, it is extremely important to have a thorough analysis of the existing organizational framework. This is important because availability and the accuracy of the data on existing systems is indispensable. Any kind of a wrong data collection may lead to unnecessary delay or in worst cases a thorough re-work as well. Thus for a correct enterprise analysis, the following steps should be taken.

1. **End-user involvement:** It is important to involve the end-users from the very beginning because it is they who can best guide on the actual existing problems and the required benefits. Eventually, the system is for his use and need and thus should be comfortable for him. The organization DSW took some good steps in this regard. Special trainers were hired to train the end users in four parallel classrooms. Trainees were also provided the flexibility of coming to the classrooms for extra practice. A help desk was created for the purpose of doubt resolution of the end users.

2. **A collaborative team:** It is important to ensure that the ERP team consists of people with both business background as well as technical background. A cross-functional team can better decide on the actual organizational needs. DSW ensured this by including three individuals in each functional team, the SAP specialist, a system analyst and a top user.

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3. **Sufficient authority:** The person designated for monitoring the implementation should be provided with sufficient authority in the execution of the process. For this purpose members of top management were asked to be in-charge of their respective modules in the form of a top user.

4. **Efficient validation:** At every stage of requirement gathering there should be a checkpoint created to validate both the need as well as the practical feasibility of a listed requirement keeping in mind both the technical as well as financial constraints. To ensure efficient validation, the decision of dividing the project into milestones was taken. Any delay in reaching the target within the stipulated time needed the approval of the top management.

Commented [A4]: Highlighting sub-points and explaining each of the appropriately adds value to the work.

System Evaluation:

While going for an ERP implementation a standard evaluation method should be adhered to, so as to include tangible metrics to ensure that organization is on the right track. This evaluation also comprises an understanding of the impact the ERP would have on the structure and role of the people in the organization (Stefanou, 2001). Rather than simply focusing on the quality of the implementation, a proper metric system should be followed to assess and quantify the actual value gained. This would help us to evaluate whether the deployment is actually successful or not.

Some steps which can be followed in this regard are:

- Timely monitoring of all project metrics like budget, timeline adherence, key performance indicators (Chen & Wang, 2010) etc.

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- Contract adherence by vendor
- Overseeing of business process management
- Overseeing of the knowledge transfer sessions in the form of training activities.
- Overseeing of data cleansing and migration aspects
- Post deployment benefits assessment and their quantification
- Overseeing whether all the requirements are being implemented or not.

Potential change management and risk issues:

The most critical part in the change management process (Francoise, 2009) is to build a user acceptance and a positive attitude of the employees towards the project. Training activities play an important role in this regard. Some of the common practices to ensure proper change management are:

- Making sure that the Executive body strongly, clearly communicates the mission and vision (Tsai, 2010) behind the implementation.
- Effectively communicating the utility and benefits of the change to the end users.
- Provide extensive training activities.
- Involve individuals who have a high potential to learn fast and then make them talk to the others.
- Efficient handling of any resistance that may arise in the beginning.

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Some of the important decisions of the DSW, which promoted efficient change management are:

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1. The CEO made sure to effectively communicate the mission and vision of the plan to managers at all levels.
2. The VPIS reported to the board of directors once a month, about all the progress that was made.
3. To efficiently handle any kind of conflicts, a steering committee was formed and was given the authority to respond to the problems.
4. To make sure that the labor unrest is controlled well, one of the disapprovals of modification by the labor union was upheld and supported.
5. To convince that the change is for a better motive, a few employees were given a department transfer rather than being fired for redundancy.
6. I.S professionals were also assured that their skill sets would be further boosted by getting trained in modern technology and no one would be fired.

These decisions had a favorable outcome in the form of better handling of change management and risk mitigation.

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Problems: Analysis and Solutions

1. The decision to go for a Big-bang implementation created a lot of problems for the enterprise. Firstly, it created certain unwanted functionalities for the users. As minimal customization was adopted, so certain unfriendly processes crept in which were both time taking and difficult to understand. This could have been avoided by proper requirement validation during the requirement analysis stage. When analyzing the enterprise it is imperative to perform requirement validation at regular intervals, had this been followed religiously, the unwanted functionalities could have been easily avoided.

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2. Secondly, a lot of reports which were needed in the day to day functioning of the enterprise were not getting generated using the new system. This can again be attributed to the haste created using a big-bang implementation. Generally a big-bang implementation brings about a lot of pros and cons with itself. (Systems, 2013)

Pros associated with a Big-Bang ERP implementation

- The new and old systems are not used simultaneously, thus redundancy is avoided
- Everyone on-boards the new system together at the same time.
- It takes a lesser time frame to implementation as transition stage is reduced to minimum.
- The cost of implementation is largely reduced.

However, the Big-Bang implementation also brings a lot of cons with it.

- Higher risk is involved in comparison to a phased move approach (Lee, 2013) as the move is abrupt without involving much in terms of transition, thus any system failure will cost a huge deal.
- The timeframe allowed for training activities is very less
- Probability of failure is a bit higher. Moreover, failure in one segment may get transmitted to other parts as well easily.

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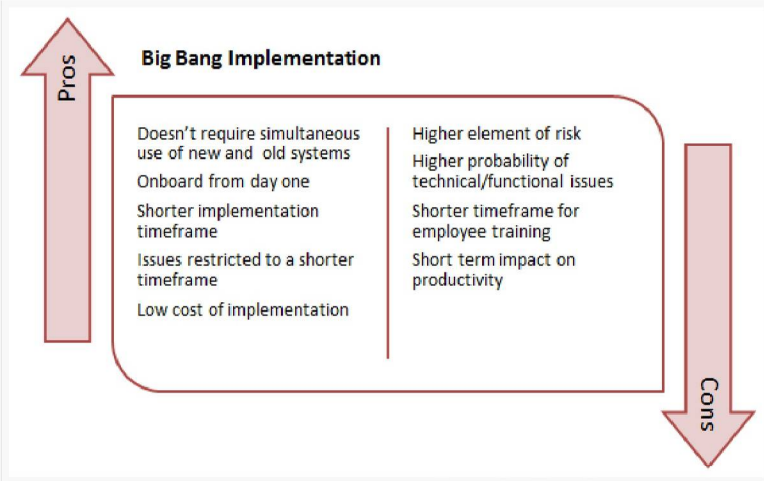

Figure 1: The pros and cons of Big-Bang ERP implementation

3. Another problem that arose was that some of the regular functions done by the DSW were not at all accounted for in the ERP package implementation. This problem again was due to the non-willingness of the higher management to customize the package as per their needs. In their quest for completely re-engineering and adjusting the processes to suit the package, they eventually ended up missing on critical function implementation. However this part was also planned to be taken care by implementing more number of modules related to marketing and project management in the near future.

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Some recommendations when adopting Big-Bang Implementation

As stated above Big-bang implementation brings with it, a number of demerits which should be addressed well during the planning stage itself, to ensure desired outcomes (Conti, 2013). Some of the recommendations are:

- **Create a collaborative method to gather requirements:** It is important to understand that sometimes the owners are quite reluctant to enlist all the requirements. They fear that the vendors will automatically restrict the implementation to only the 'must-have' features and completely ignore the 'nice-to-have' features. This is very critical especially in case of a Big-Bang ERP implementation because there is hardly any time frame for transition where the users can give in more and more feedback for improvement. To overcome this problem, it is important to make the consultants assume a collaborative role (Scarborough, 2013). There should be a proper bridge constructed between the consultant's knowledge of the ERP system and the process owner's knowledge of the business process and requirements. There should be equal stress given to technical issues as well as the human interactions involved to deal with them.

- **Streamlining the knowledge transfer process:** When it comes to knowledge transfer, it is extremely important to make sure that the process is fool proof. This is especially critical in case of a Big-Bang implementation because it is a one shot implementation and minimum time is available for knowledge transfer. In such a scenario a few guidelines should be followed.

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- Ensure a good mix of domain experts and decision making authorities
- Set learning objectives well in advance.
- As far as possible make use of incremental techniques for learning.
- Try to organize the resources into a mentor-supported form rather than a classroom driven structure.

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Summary of the report:

The report briefly highlights the four critical success factors which need to be taken into consideration while implementing ERP in an organization. Organizational strategy being the first critical success factor involves the planning and preparation in the form of stakeholder management, project management, information system management and strategic steps taken for the same. Enterprise analysis as the second factor speaks about the thorough analysis of the current organizational set-up, a clear cut understanding of the requirements. It also includes the methods adopted to validate these requirements and bring about a complete end-user involvement for the same. System evaluation being the third critical success factor deals in the quantification of the required needs and development of proper metrics for tracking the same. Change management as the last factor lays stress on how the higher management needs to inculcate the spirit to change in the organization. How the resistances are to be addressed? How the different agents of change need to manage their responsibilities to reduce the risks to the

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minimum level. A proper planning in line with these factors ensures that the complexities and difficulties involved in the ERP implementation are addressed well in advance. Only then can it turn out into a successful ERP project.

Commented [A9]: All main points have been summed up well.

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Criterion	Levels of achievement		
	Exemplary	**Good**	**Poor**
Writing style and presentation are clear			
• Title	Title is concise and informative so readers can anticipate the contents of the contribution and interested people look forward to reading it.	The title gives a general indication of the material covered in the contribution, but have to read the document to fully appreciate what is covered. Some potential readers may be lost because they can't clearly anticipate the material covered by reading the title.	The linkage between the title and the text is not clear. Reader may skip the contribution because they don't appreciate its relevance.
• Introduction	Introductory statement clearly indicates the main purpose of the contribution and suggests the plan of organization, so the reader can anticipate the text that will follow.	Introductory statement indicates the main purpose of the contribution in general terms, so the reader has some idea of what will follow.	The introduction does not give an overview of the contribution so the readers are not sure what to expect as they read the text.
• Main Body	Main body of contribution makes connected points that clearly build the argument so the text flows from introduction to conclusion in a logical manner, thereby helping the reader to follow the thinking behind the text.	The main body presents a number of points that allow the reader to understand the argument, but lapses in the writing may force the reader to make some connections between the parts.	The text is not well structured so the reader must stop reading at times to try to makes sense of the text.
• Conclusion	The main point of the contribution is clearly indicated and reinforced so the reader can clearly remember it.	The main point of the contribution is indicated, but may be stated in an unconvincing manner.	The concluding section does not reinforce or revisit the main point so the reader is unsure about it and likely to misinterpret or forget it.
• Written expression	Sentences and paragraphs are well structured and clear so the reader can focus on what is written. Each paragraph has a topic sentence that indicates the subject matter.	Minor lapses in sentence structure, such as run-on sentences and unnecessarily complex sentence structures, force the reader to pause and reflect on the meaning of the text. Paragraphs present a complete argument, but may not flow so well.	Many sentences are poorly structured so the reader must stop often to reflect on the meaning of the text. Many paragraphs lack topic sentences or have poor flow so the main points and linkages among explanatory text are not clear.
• Grammar, punctuation and spelling	Grammar, spelling and punctuation are flawless, which	Some minor errors in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation detract from the	Many errors in grammar, spelling and/or punctuation make reading

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	allows the reader to focus on the message.	quality of the text, but do not impair the communication.	the text difficult and communication is impaired.
Concepts and arguments are well developed			
• Accuracy	All information is accurately reported using appropriate terminology so the information is reliable.	The information is largely accurate but imprecise language could lead a reader to misinterpret aspects of the text.	Although the gist of the information is correct, there are problems with the interpretation of it. A reader can be misled by the text.
• Relevance	Connections between the contribution and the main topic of the discussion are clearly indicated.	Connections between the contribution and the main topic of the discussion are indicated or implied, but the reader needs to pause to clarify those connections.	Although the text is relevant, this is not clearly indicated, so the reader must guess how the text relates to the main topic.
• Significance	The reason why the contribution is important to the overall discussion is clearly described and discussed so the reader takes the contribution seriously.	The reason why the contribution is important is touched on but not elucidated, so the reader must make some interpretations about the author's view of the contribution's significance.	The contribution may include significant material but this is not indicated, so the reader must guess it.
• Clarity	The main points and new technical terms are clearly described and/or explained so the reader is left with no ambiguity about what was written.	Although the text is clear to informed audiences, unexplained points may leave room for alternative interpretations of the text.	Key points and new technical terms are not explained so the reader is confused.
• Independence	The contribution is completely self-contained so the reader does not have to read other contributions or published materials to understand what was written about.	The text is sufficiently clear that the reader can understand the main point without further reading, but some parts of the text are not clear without consulting earlier contributions or other sources of information.	The text is written in a manner that presumes considerable prior knowledge, so the reader must have a thorough knowledge of what has been written about the subject in order to understand the main point of the contribution.
Contribution is responsive to another contribution	The writer links ideas submitted by others to their own contribution in a manner that substantially strengthens the group's efforts to resolve the main problem. This linkage can include elaboration of what was previously written, a critique or questioning of it, demonstration of linkages among	The writer makes references to earlier works that are a starting point for new ideas but, apart from the reference to the earlier work, not much information is incorporated	The text mentions other contributions but neither explains the reference nor substantially adds to it, so there is no clear benefit to the resolution of the main problem from citing the earlier contribution.

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	two or more earlier contributions, and/or utilization of an earlier contribution as a foundation to build your own.		
Text is supported by references			
• Sources indicated	All information and ideas that are not commonly know are supported with references to sources, so the reader has confidence that the information is not based on hearsay or the writer's opinion or assumptions alone.	Most sources are indicated, but in only a few cases the sources are not given or are ambiguous, so the reader has to check some of the sources.	Sources are cited for some specific parts of the contribution, but no references are supplied for information and ideas that are clearly not the author's, so the reader has no idea of the validity and authority of the information.
• Relevant references	Information, concepts and opinions are supported with references to published literature, especially primary (original) sources of information, rather than review articles or textbooks. This allows the reader to independently review the cited sources. More than one reference is cited to support key points, which adds strength and authority to the argument.	One or a few references are used to support the text. Thus the contribution is supported but this may be an idiosyncratic source. Some general references to textbooks are made that could have been replaced by primary references which are more thorough and authoritative.	Information comes from Web sites or other sources that have no recognized authority, so the validity or strength of the source is unknown.
• Citation style	References cited appropriately in the text, and the correct format is used in the text when citing information, so the reader clearly knows which information is attributable to which source.	Minor lapses in citation format do not prevent the reader from finding the sources in the reference list at the end of the contribution.	Citation format incorrect or poorly placed in the text, so citations distract from reading.
• Bibliographic information	The reference list contains complete bibliographic information (author's name(s), publication date, title, source, date web page accessed), so a reader can easily find the references for their own research. The authority of sources can be evaluated by checking them.	Bibliographic information largely complete, but some information missing so the reader may have difficulty finding some references. Most sources can still be easily checked.	Not all references are listed, information in the reference list is incorrect, or important information is missing from the reference list, so the reader is unable to find the same sources of information and the authority of sources is almost entirely unknown.

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Comments: The assignment has been very well written with a clear introduction and a connection generated between the contribution and the main point. Minor gaps in grammatical applications if removed could make the piece of work appropriate.

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