

Strategic Projects/Initiatives

John I Sommer jsommer@hotmail.com (919) 562-9185

Introduction:

This document contains a few of the strategic IT projects or initiatives from my career in IT management. I have had the opportunity to see IT change from a very centralized mainframe environment to a flexible distributed computing environment with more capabilities to impact and solve business issues.

Since this document addresses strategic IT managements I would like to start it with a list from Michael Vizard (Computerworld 2001) of top 10 technology trends. Even though the list is from 2001, the items are still very pertinent for IT to review as ways technology can aid in meeting business objectives.

Top 10 Technology Trends

Michael Vizard (Info World 2001)

- 1) Customer Relationship Management (CRM)
- 2) Supply Chain Management
- 3) Knowledge Management
- 4) Content Management (right place, right time right format)
- 5) Peer to Peer personal networking enabler
- 6) Business Process Integration
- 7) Mobile Commerce
- 8) Optical computing
- 9) Infrastructure effectiveness and efficiency
- 10) Application Framework

An emphasis of my IT management career has been on the following list, which I have developed over the years:

Seven Key IT Focus Areas

- 1) Quality Management
 - a. Continuous Improvement
 - b. Control of Cost (elimination of waste)
 - c. Revenue
- 2) Customer Satisfaction (internal & external)
- 3) Competitive Advantage
- 4) Management Effectiveness
- 5) Facilitate/Enable Organizational Changes
- 6) Effective & Efficient utilization of Technological Opportunities
- 7) Management of Information Technical Risks

In addition to the list here, you can visit my web page http://www.jsommer.com/AboutMe/SixSigma_Examples.htm to see a list of specific small projects I completed while working in one of our manufacturing plants. I stayed on at the plant after our tiger team reviewed and presented solutions to the plant's systemic quality issues. Even though each project was small, the overall effect was probably a savings of \$250,000. On the page I have a quote that I believe nicely described the approach and how I achieve acceptance of change.

"My job is to disturb the system. I give people new ways to think. It's more of a matter of offering people different perspectives and influencing their thinking than trying to drive them."

Strategic Projects/Initiatives

John I Sommer jsommer@hotmail.com (919) 562-9185

Report Delivery System

OPPORTUNITY

Process for creation of new reports or making changes to existing reports took too long and was not meeting the needs of management.

RESULTS

Led an IT team to create an efficient report development and delivery system. The changes included a new web interface for users to run reports, which offered features such as ability to save previously run report parameters. The time to implement reports was reduced from multiple days to minutes through the use of an administrative front end with reusable parameter dialogs. In addition, report databases were created designed for reporting efficiency. This enabled us to build an efficient and effective management reporting systems that is very responsive to managements business analysis needs.

QS9000/ISO9001 Certification

OPPORTUNITY

A directive from management and our customers required the company to attain QS9000/ISO-9001 certification. We did not have a good technical quality support system in place.

RESULTS

I reviewed various quality system software based on the certification and the company's quality objectives. Once a package was selected I prepared a presentation to management for their review and approval. It was approved and I implemented a Lotus Notes based system to meet needs of documentation control, audit management, corrective action management, training record management, deviation management and engineering change management. Another system was implemented to support process control documentation such as pFMEA, dFMEA, process instructions. Instead of a multitude of various systems for quality we now had a standard that was easy to use and effective.

The system was a great benefit in aiding the certification process. I was also the project manager for the certification effort, which we did attain. The auditors really liked the system and they gained more confidence in our quality system.

Strategic Projects/Initiatives

John I Sommer jsommer@hotmail.com (919) 562-9185

Traceability System

OPPORTUNITY

The company's largest plant produces commercial steering gears, which is a safety critical product. Recalls can be very expensive. Management wanted to be able to reduce the scope of any recall to the smallest possible.

RESULTS

Led an IT and plant quality team to develop requirements and review software packages called Manufacturing Execution Systems (MES). Unfortunately we were not able to find a package system so we designed our own. The system incorporated some new technology for us. It utilized wireless bar code scanners to collect data from key operations on the shop floor. The parts being scanned were metal parts and we needed to be able to record each part. We found a bar code machine that was able to laser etch a bar code into the part. A SQL database was developed to collect the data and a reporting system gave quality management the information needed to trace shipped product to manufacturing dates and from manufacturing dates to shipped product. The system enabled quality to reduce the scope of an issue to well defined date range. It also improved our relationship with our customers by reducing effect on them of any product recall. It also helped in the management of warranty administration, sending of maintenance bulletins, and reduced quality costs.

CAD System

OPPORTUNITY

Current CAD system was a combination of mainframe and UNIX workstation systems utilizing two-dimensional CAD capability.

RESULTS

The Advanced Engineering Manager and myself led a team of IT and engineering people to define, review, select and implement a new CAD system. The requirements definition was a very detailed process with many requirements. The new system would require a technology change, a conversion of existing drawings, support of multiple drawing formats to meet customer needs, and cost constraints. The team process went very well and we selected and implemented a solution that was very successful. Engineering obtained 3-D capability and the system provide us the base to meet customer requirements and the ability to reduce IT costs. It also provides a solid base for us to take advantage of emerging technologies for CAM (Computer Aided Manufacturing), solid modeling, shop floor viewing of drawings and PDM (product document management).

Strategic Projects/Initiatives

John I Sommer jsommer@hotmail.com (919) 562-9185

Sales Force Automation

OPPORTUNITY

Sales group was collecting a lot of very good information through customer interaction but was not able to make this information readily available to the Director of Sales or other members of the executive management team. Also, many presentations were developed for various visits but there was not a good way to catalog and reuse components of the presentations.

RESULTS

The issue was a combination of data and document management. With the assistance of an intern, we developed a presentation to management on Collaborative Computing (Workflow Management). Our practical application of this technology was a new Sales Force Automation system. The system would integrate with our main customer information system, allow sales people to collect customer information and documents on their laptops while on the road, be able to synchronize their systems with the main data repository and provide management easy access to the information by various logical views. Various documents requiring approval, such as RFQs, could be done with the system using the workflow component. The system also provides a means to catalog and search for various documents such as presentations. The design was accepted and the system was implemented. The organization and increased availability of customer information allowed the sales group to improve forecasting, manage customers, inform other areas of customer issues and needs, and provide on the spot information while they were in front of the customer.

IT Vision System

OPPORTUNITY

IT was evolving into a very different type of business organization. New technology was able to provide users with more tools to do things for themselves, IT with more central management capabilities, increased remote computing capabilities and distributed computing power.

RESULTS

I needed to convey the change to my IT team and our internal customers. We needed to take advantage of the new technology and have our customer understand the new capabilities can benefit the business. All the technology was not currently available but was coming in a very short time. Since this was a glimpse into the future, I did not want it to be a dry or technical presentation. I enlisted the aid of one of our graphics designers. A storyboard was completed and with his design talent a cartoon style of presentation of the future of IT was created. My IT team participated in the development and the delivery of the presentation. It set the foundation for how we could leverage technology in new ways to solve business issues as well as how the interaction and roles between the users and the IT team would change. You can view this presentation at a page of my web site. Keep in mind this was done in 1994 when much of the technology we take for granted today was just emerging. http://www.jsommer.com/ITvision_cartoons/index.html