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Your new Integrated Workplace Management System was launched with a fanfare and a pat on the back for all concerned—including a big thank you to your supplier for a seamless implementation. A few months later, just how much use are you getting out of the system? The answer is, probably not enough.

- Functional administrators participate in a systems implementation.
- The management team understands the facility processes.

Mature management begins after initial project delivery and consists of both operational administrators and business analysts on a tactical level; though in some organizations, functional administrators carry out both roles. From the beginning, administrators implement small system modifications, answer user queries and update systems documentation. Communication between administrators and users is vital. It is important that users get to know the system, understand its functionality and help deliver additional benefits. The business analyst follows the development of the organization from a more abstract position, regularly analyzing the system set-up to establish whether modification or expansion is required. This approach enables the delivery of a structured system roadmap for future development.

Not every organization will manage the IWMS on a full-time basis. Administration may be carried out in addition to other responsibilities within smaller organizations. However, even on this smaller scale, it is important to have clearly defined procedures in place and to maintain communication with system users. The systems analyst should also continue to monitor changes within the organization to ensure the system remains relevant to the business' needs.

A mature management solution costs money—approximately a third of the overall information and communication technology (ICT) expenditure will involve application management costs.¹ These are fixed costs that are spread out over the operational management of many processes. However, good management and the efficient deployment of the IWMS will generate income, as efficiency improvements in these processes will be supported as a continuous process.

A good example of maturity in functional system management is BB&T Corporation and the facility management department of ING Bank. The system management department has appointed functions, a direct line to the ICT department, is accessible

Using Technology to Boost the Bottom Line

DAVID STILLEBROER
IWAN VAN ELDIJK

Making a profit from the implementation of IWMS will depend strongly on the professional set-up of the management function—the team responsible for keeping the system running smoothly and successfully integrating process and information flows.

Successful system management comprises both functional and technical elements. The following highlights four key elements of functional system management, essential to making the most of your IWMS.

Mature management

A mature management model comprised of a number of features:

- Tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined.



through internal marketing and has a strong consultative voice in the preparation of new developments.

Embedded process management

In order to get the most from an IWMS, systems management needs to be firmly embedded into internal processes. This typically takes place in two ways:

- Guaranteeing the correct use of the system; knowing how it works.
- Continuously harmonizing the system and any dependent processes with each other.

A vital first step is to appoint a system owner. They would usually be the primary user of the system and often the financier of the original project. The system owner will be responsible for monitoring system performance to ensure the IWMS continues to fit with business processes and will provide information to support any change management. This information is rarely in a format that can be processed by the IWMS automatically, so the proactive gathering and translating of information for the IWMS are important competencies for the systems administrator. A second tier of key users is often appointed, especially when the IWMS is being used to manage a range of disparate processes.

Step two is the appointment of data owners amongst system users. These individuals are given the responsibility of ensuring that data is kept up-to-date and complete. Each entry in the system should have a data owner, as the system administrator cannot be expected to manage all of the system data. Ignoring this responsibility means data quickly becomes obsolete, reducing the reliability of the system. It is recommended that a system audit take place every two years, even if management processes are tightly controlled.

Ensuring systematic lines of communication between system administrators and users on all levels is the third step. Consultation between key users, systems owner, business analysts and administrators should result in the IWMS being fully integrated into business operations. This will result in process changes and new IWMS opportunities influencing and strengthening each other. The systems owner and key



users will provide input to the consultation with system administrators by way of recommending changes to processes and information needs or planned organization changes. The end being an adjusted roadmap of internal projects to ensure that the system can be modified or expanded.

Two good examples of embedded process management can be found at the insurance company Delta Lloyd and Deutsche Bahn Railway in Germany. These organizations ensured strong communication with the business and end users from the preparation phase of the project. During the project, the business lines were responsible for designing adapted processes and bidirectional communication with end users of the system. Adaptation of the new system started within the business lines from the start of the project—initiated by the business lines themselves and supported by the project team and system management department.

Continual learning and development

Systems administrators and users should receive training in respect of systems processes and operation when the IWMS is initially delivered. However, this training only forms the basis of how to use the IWMS in practice. An ongoing investment in training and development is required to ensure the best results from the system.

For the systems administrator, this training consists of ensuring an expansion of knowledge and keeping up-to-date with the developments of systems applications. The business analyst will be able to expand and keep his or her knowledge current about the package on a more global level and focus further on user needs and best practice methodologies through consultation with other organizations using the IWMS. Often, the systems provider will offer a platform for sharing best practices, as it is important for management to be fully aware of systems capabilities in order to offer good advice to internal users.

Users who work with the IWMS on a daily basis quickly acquire insight into the use of the systems applications. For those who use the system less frequently, training by the systems administrator is a valuable tool in terms of user motivation and competence. A systems administrator who not only



understands how the IWMS operates but is also well-informed about changes in business processes, can help to encourage a learning culture around the IWMS, helping to ensure that the business continues to develop in regard to the use of the system. User feedback and ideas should be recorded and assessed by key users. Offering an open test environment to users—in which they can train themselves—further encourages development.

A good example of continual learning and development is Essent, a European energy supplier. IWMS systems management adds best practices knowledge of suppliers, involves the IWMS supplier in daily systems management and has an active participation in a key user platform by the IWMS supplier. In addition, the organization practices a train-the-trainer principle for the training of end users. This principle stimulates the IWMS trainer within the organization to continue their education and development to keep up with a changing organization and features of the IWMS.

Effective reinvestment

Systems management allows for the development of a roadmap incorporating future expansion and the development of applications with a broader scope. IWMS solutions are generally implemented on a

more professional level than before, with system management process developed in the same controlled manner as the original implementation. One sees the adaptation of the strategy, implementation and ongoing management for built systems—even when the system is a small scale internal implementation with limited users and functionality. Tracking proposed and realized benefits of small systems expansions will ensure management's ability to prove added value to users when major changes occur.

A good example of effective reinvestment is the flower auction Aalsmeer, the world's largest auction facility in floricultural products. Continuous improvement of the IWMS is adapted as a policy. The systems department initiates an annual project backlog with new initiatives to improve internal processes and/or the usage of the IWMS. Some projects are implemented with the help of the IWMS supplier, some in cooperation of the business lines and some for systems management only.

Delivering tangible benefits

The successful implementation of an IWMS demands a high level of investment—both in time and money. It is an ongoing project that requires effective management to realize its potential. A mature management approach, embedded management processes, an

ongoing investment in training and development and effective financial and project management of future system developments, will help organizations get the most from their IWMS. Delivering tangible benefits, both for an organization and its customers means celebrating the success of its IWMS every year. **FMJ**

¹ Smalley, M. & M. Meijer (2004). *IT Beheer Jaarboek 2004*. Den Haag: ten Hagen & Stam.



David Stillebroer

After his studies in facility management and receiving a Master of Real Estate Management, David Stillebroer MRE has been working as a real estate business consultant at Planon: info@planonIWMS.com.



Iwan van Eldijk

After his studies in facility management and receiving a Master of Facility Management, Iwan van Eldijk MFM has worked in the facilities field. He currently works as a business consultant at Planon: info@planonIWMS.com.

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