Jacob Ellis

Case 1 Burlington Northern: The ARES Decision

CIS410

9/5/12

1. **Dilemma:** Is it feasible for Burlington Northern Railroad to invest $350 million dollars ARES system into their company’s railroad system? Will the benefits out way the cost of such a large and possibly industry changing technological advancement? Are there other alternatives?
2. **Role of IT:** The role of IT, for Burlington Northern, is the use of the (ARES) Advances Railroad Electronics System. ARES was originally developed by Collins Air Transport Division of Rockwell International for aircrafts and is now being developed in order to optimize the use of railroads and train cars. The entire ARES system provides an electronics unit in each locomotive, which has the ability to receive signals from the department of defense’s GPS (Global Positioning Satellites) and calculate the position of each locomotive with great accuracy. With the rapid signal transmissions, the GPS system is able to calculate the speed of the train and communicates all of this information back to the control center. In essence the new technology allows BN to maintain track conditions, train routes and delivery times.
3. **Critical Stakeholders and their rights:**
   1. **BN/BR Company –**
   2. **Employees –**
   3. **Customer –**
4. **Alternative courses of action**
   1. **Do nothing –**
   2. **Purchase and implement ARES as soon as possible –**
   3. **Purchase and implement ARES in iterations –**
   4. **Do not be the first to use ARES or use the ATCS system that will be ready in 4-5 years -**
5. **My normative recommendation:** My personal recommendation is implementing the Advanced Railroad Electronics System in iterations because I believe it is the safest and best choice for all stakeholders.

**Works Cited**

Management of Information Systems by Professor Barker: Case 5-2 The incident of Waco Manufacturing

Porter’s five forces