

With the advent of Industry 4.0 and the rise of innovative technologies, the need for businesses to properly harness Information Technology (IT) as a strategic asset is now more urgent than ever. Hence, for any company looking to start embracing IT as a strategic asset, change is necessary to properly integrate IT into the business. My IS3103 journey has taught me the importance of planning for change and the paramount role leaders play in enabling change. Much more goes into planning for change than simply thinking of the end goals. This reflection will discuss my take on planning for change in 2 main perspectives, Strategy and People.

Planning a digital transformation within a business is all about how to integrate IT into the business. The first step would be to imagine the objectives of transformation, of how IT will push the business to greater heights. This exposes the need to understand how Information Systems (IS) strategies are able to properly align with the business's overall strategies. This can be done by first conducting an analysis on both the external factors and internal factors affecting the business. Understanding the threats, bargaining power and resources of the company, it can become much easier to see where IT can help along the value chain to improve current business processes, all with the aim of letting IT become an enabler of business strategy. In the lecture, we see different examples of systems which help to take in data and process them in a way which becomes quality information. Thus a company should plan and classify their IS architecture to know the type of data they are collecting and then be able to choose the correct IS infrastructure to better process data received into information assets. One useful analysis taught would be to use a strategic grid analysis, such as Nolan and McFarlan's IT Strategic Impact Grid. This can be useful to classify how the company uses IT and IS, which then can help reveal if the IS strategy is aligned with Business strategy and if re-prioritisation is required. Therefore, by doing a thorough analysis of the company's business strategy, we are able to properly have a high level vision and plan of how to align IS strategies with the business strategy.

The next step of the planning which I think is crucial would be risk management. Change introduces new procedures and the accompanying risks. A good risk management plan will cover all IT-related risks and as introduced in lectures, there are comprehensive standards and guides for companies to follow to cover all their bases. I personally want to focus on business continuity planning as that stands out to me most when planning for change. Business continuity plans are about ensuring that in the event of a disaster there is a protocol to follow which can help to minimise interruptions or losses. I believe that everyone is vital to the success of a business continuity plan and hence the business continuity manager has to step into the role of a leader to train and test all employees to ensure that they are always able to properly execute that plan. After going through this content and reflecting on it, I have a better appreciation of the crucial "behind the scenes" planning which might usually not come to mind when first planning for change.

The other perspective which I think planning for change will mostly centre around are people, specifically people who will be affected by change. A drastic change such as a digital transformation will affect a huge amount of people within the company. In IS3103, learning about stakeholder management was largely useful, both for applying in the assignments and

lessons in IS3103, and also for improving my communication with others. Recitation lessons also focus on the importance of stakeholder management as an understanding of the audience. Conducting a thorough stakeholder analysis during the planning phase is extremely crucial to the success of the change as well. A good stakeholder analysis can properly address the concerns of all groups and this will increase the uptake of the new change. During recitation, audience analysis had to be thorough so as to have a more impactful presentation and this revealed to me the importance of having a good “buy in” for the audience. A “buy in” is something which will make the audience more interested in the change as there is something which they can personally benefit from. My previous understanding would only be to focus on the support which should be given to help the audience better adjust to a change, be it by creating more training sessions, or having more feedback sessions. Going through the rigorous routine during recitations, I believe that it has helped me better understand others perspectives and become more understanding and convincing. Therefore, having a good stakeholder analysis and a good plan to overcome resistance can increase the uptake and hence success of the change.

Having a leader is extremely important during the period of change. A leader should be able to see both the high level planning, and to understand the ground sentiment by being down to earth. This balance is extremely important as there are some changes which although might be unpopular but are important changes for future progress. Hence, a leader has to maintain the motivation of all stakeholders to support the change, as well as coax the stakeholders who are on the fence or against the change to be more positive towards it. As taught during recitation, a self aware leader is someone who is in control of their emotions and thoughts. They are also more sensitive to social situations and this can lead them to have a higher emotional intelligence. To others, a self aware leader can seem much more personable and relatable who can be trusted. In my own personal experience, I realise how being able to control my emotions during group projects has led to better discussions. When someone else was discussing their out of topic idea, I caught myself feeling irritated, thinking that they were wasting time. In this moment, I was able to suppress the feeling of irritation and instead turn it into a more positive feeling of curiosity. This resulted in a fruitful discussion as although the idea was slightly off topic, its concept was able to be well adapted into the work in the end and I think this has also prevented any friction within the group. Therefore, having a self aware leader is vital to the success of the change as they are able to properly rally the organisation to adopt the new changes.

“If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. This old proverb rings true when reflecting back on the content taught in IS3103. To create an impactful change, such as introducing a digital transformation into any business, good planning is necessary to prevent failure. The lessons from IS3103 lectures seem to follow a certain order of how planning change should be conducted as well. Moreover, a focus on the importance of leaders, such as the leadership styles and ethics, further highlights how a leader is vital to conducting a holistic planning of change management. With proper planning and a self aware leader the right environment for change can be created.

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