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Case Study 2 - Cisco

1. Solvik and Redfield did not initially want to deploy an ERP due to concerns over cost and the scale of the undertaking. Rather than deploying an ERP, Solvik initially planned to let each functional area of Cisco "make its own decision regarding the application of timing of its move" to modernized systems that could scale with the company's growth, though they would have to adhere to "common architecture and databases" (2.5).
2. To successfully select an ERP supplier and integrate a new ERP system into Cisco processes, management decided to assemble a team not only of the best of Cisco's team, but also of partners from KPMG, who brought to the table "a practice of people that were very experienced in the industry" (4.3). This combined team of 20 first researched the ERP packages of other major firms, while simultaneously harnessing existing research from firms such as the Gartner Group. With this knowledge, Cisco had a field of "five packages within two days" (4.4), and within a week was down to two. Cisco sent out RFPs to both vendors, allowing them two weeks to evaluate sample data from Cisco and demonstrate the capabilities of their ERP packages. The team approached the board with budget and duration estimates, which the board approved.
3. Solvik knew that Cisco's current systems simply could not handle its anticipated growth. Though he and Redfield initially hoped to incrementally upgrade sections of Cisco's ERP network, Solvik concluded that "Cisco had little choice but to move" (6.1).

4. The first stage of CRP, CRP0, involved training and getting the application up and running. This configuration was by design imperfect, as the focus was mainly on efficiency. Through this process, despite hopes to the contrary, Cisco learned that modifications to the ERP software were necessary, and "some of the changes would be substantial" (8.5). The team moved to the next stage, CRP1. CRP1 split the project between track leaders and their respective teams, focusing on modeling and establishing modification requests by tier of priority. This process not only clarified the extent of modifications that would be necessary, but also the fact that Oracle would not be able to "adequately support the after sales needs of [Cisco]" (9.4), necessitating a service support package. With CRP2 began the major modification process, as well as the realization that a shift to a data warehouse structure would be necessary. To facilitate this, Cisco's IT department designed a system to bridge historic data with future inputs. As these modifications were completed, Cisco transitioned to CRP3, which involved a full system test. Data was captured and rerun based on a full day of business, with each team returning a simple yes, no evaluation on the readiness of their respective applications.
5. Upon transitioning to Oracle, Cisco quickly realized that the system was majorly unstable, with the system going down "On average…nearly once a day" (10.5). Oracle's hardware allocation for Cisco's ERP system was simply insufficient, however, due to a unique contract, "the onus for fixing the…problems fell completely on the hardware vendor" (10.5). In addition, Cisco had not "test[ed] the system with a big enough database attached to it" (10.6). This was a simple oversight issue that Cisco could have avoided. Rather than running data as it occurs during the business day, randomly and concurrently, Cisco tested processes sequentially, with only the necessary data for testing.

6. Due to the sheer volume of modifications Cisco would have to make to Oracle's ERP system, modifications "were classified as Red, Yellow, or Green", signaling their extremity. Many of these changes had to do with operational efficiency, particularly with the automation of processes. In large part, the shortcomings in Oracle's "vanilla" package can be attributed to the fact that Cisco was "the first major implementation of a new release of Oracle's ERP product" (5.1). As such, this product was not fully featured, especially for the scale Cisco was operating at. Cisco was careful to avoid modifications that could clash with future versions of Oracle's package, and sometimes "Cisco modifications were later incorporated into Oracle's core product" (9.8). The product configurator is a great example of this, demonstrating automation of logical order validation before processing.