IS Management:
Acquiring Executive Support

Introduction

- Regardless of how well we design and implement systems management processes, they will likely fail without the approval & support of senior management
- At some point all IT related needs require executive approvals

Understanding systems management

- The term may have different meanings to different people
  - The activity of identifying and integrating various products and processes in order to provide a stable and responsive IT environment

Understanding systems management

- A management activity
    - Integrating separate but related products and processes
- The overall objective is to bring **stability** and **responsiveness** to an IT infrastructure
    - stability means that systems are always up and accessible as scheduled…how can it be measured?
        - MTBF, MTTR, % of available uptime, amount of actual downtime

Understanding systems management

- Responsiveness refers to how quickly tasks are processed and completed...how can it be measured?
  - Number of tasks processed per hour; average time to complete a single transaction

Why executive support is critical in IS management

- Critical functions of IS management are necessary to run contemporary systems effectively
- Buy-in
- Proper engagement between management and IS personnel
- Any other?

Building business case for systems management

- A business case is a clear and succinct cost justification for funds to be expended for new systems or upgrade
  - A business case will itemize all of the associated costs and compare it to the expected benefits
    - Often difficult to predict true benefits as often paybacks are more qualitative than quantitative
- CIOs insist that well-developed business cases be presented to ensure the cost-effectiveness of IT system

Building business case for systems management

- Monetary value are most commonly used by business professionals in making technology decisions
  - Yet they are least offered by IT professionals in presenting the benefits of a process improvement

Building business case for systems management

- One way to be effective with business cases is to develop them for the appropriate system management function
  - Understanding which functions are the most beneficial to a company at any point in time is critical to acquiring management support

Building business case for systems management

- It is also important to meet and confer with senior IT executives to confirm that the infrastructure functions thought to be critical are in fact correct ones

Building business case for systems management

- Costs occasionally overlooked when implementing systems management function:
  - Recruiting
  - Training
  - Office space
  - Software enhancements
  - Software maintenance
  - Hardware upgrades
  - Hardware maintenance
  - Scheduled outages

Building business case for systems management

- Benefits of implementing systems management function occasionally overlooked :
  - Being able to predict capacity shortages before they occur
  - Avoiding lost labor time for users by reducing both the frequency and duration of outage
  - Increasing productivity by improving response time
  - Ensuring business continuity during disaster recovery
  - Avoiding the cost of rebuilding databases and reissuing transactions

Building business case for systems management

- A final step-one that is rarely pursued
  - Soliciting testimonials from other stakeholders in a different company
    - The selection should be based on those using similar product in a similar environment…relevance?
  - This can help by demonstrating real-life benefits of a product in an actual business setting

Summary of basic steps used to develop business case for any systems management function

- Understand which IT business goals are most critical to a firm's business goals
- Determine which systems management functions are most critical to meeting the IT business goals that are aligned to those of the company
- Meet and confer with IT senior management to confirm and prioritize the systems management functions

Summary of basic steps used to develop business case for any systems management function

- Accurately estimate all costs associated with the implementation and maintenance of a particular function
- Itemize all benefits associated with a particular function
- Convert benefits to monetary equivalence to the extent possible
- Solicit customer references for the product being proposed

Educating executives on value of systems management

- Don't only focus on the technical merits. Showcase the business benefits effectively
- Present information and proposals in commonly used business terms not technical jargon
- Speak their language: what is it that matters to them i.e. cost, lease vs buy comparisons, tax implications, depreciation

How do you ensure ongoing executive support?

- Discussion