Derrick Fox

CS 136

Week 2

June 7, 2014

Chapter 2, page 89 - 90

Personal Trainer, Inc.

1. Based on the background facts described in Chapter 1, draft a mission statement for Personal Trainer. Consider the firm's overall direction, and the services, products, and experiences the company might want to offer its customers in the future. In your statement, consider all the stakeholders affected by Personal Trainer's operations.

The book describes the mission statement to be a statement that describes a company’s overall purpose, products, services, and values. It serves as the company’s foundation for the company’s major goals, shorter-term objectives, and day-to-day business. Based on this definition, I would say that Personal Trainer Inc.’s mission statement is as follows:

Personal Trainer seeks to provide the customer with the latest state-of-the-art physical training resources. By providing the customer with educational classes, a broad range of training machines and equipment, and a knowledgeable staff we distinguish ourselves as more of a healthy community center rather than just a gym. With access to our health food snack bar, child day care center, and around the clock training support the customer can feel like part of a team each supporting one another in their personal growth.

2. Susan and Gray probably will need more information about the proposed system. Make a list of people whom they might want to interview. Also, suggest other fact-finding techniques they should consider.

Being that Susan and Gray have seemed to opted for an ERP system is would probably be best to interview the heads of each department within the entire enterprise to see the similarities and differences in their needs. The first and most obvious is the president Cassia Umi herself. In addition to basic office functionality like email, calendars, word processing, and spreadsheets there is a good chance that a corporate president will need even more than these basics. She may also want an easy way to query a database and then have that data represented graphically, and so on and so forth. Secondly, I would interview the top level managers starting with Janet McDonald Manager of Finance. Financial systems run off of data and so her needs are going to directly linked to the IT system. The next manager is Tai Tranh the Manager of Sales and Marketing. And lastly Reed Cotter the Manager of Operations, this person will be another individual who will be heavily reliant on the IT system for a number of reasons and so understanding his needs is vital as well. I believe it would also behoove them to interview two or three store level managers to see the commonality in their more granular needs. Also, interviewing the end users like personal trainers and receptionists to see what is most important to them would also be wise.

In addition to interviews, there are some other fact finding techniques I would suggest. First, find out what systems the competition already has in place. What are the advantages of their system? What are the disadvantages that can be addressed? And secondly, they will need more people on staff for the future ERP then they have now and it could be advantageous to talk to some of those people now. For example, they are going to need network administrators and QA professionals. Speaking to a few of them ahead of time could give them a better idea of their salaries and whether or not their expectations are realistic.

3. Consider the internal and external factors that affect information systems. Which factors, in your opinion, will have the greatest impact on the system proposed for the new supercenter? Explain your answer.

Some of the greatest factors that will impact the new system are usability, reliability, universality, and utility. When I say usability I mean that the end user is not going to be a computer programmer they are going to be a personal trainer. And so therefore you need to develop a system that is easy and intuitive for a personal trainer to adopt and use is paramount. The old expression “garbage in, garbage out” applies here perfectly because if the system is too difficult for the end user to use, it will not be used and all of the cost will be wasted. When I say reliability I mean it has to work all of the time because it is a mission critical system. When I say universality I mean there has to be a standard operating procedure that is symmetrical throughout the enterprise. This way, when data is entered into the system, you can be sure that it is standardized and uniform so that it may be queried and referenced accurately. Finally, when I say utility I mean that I has to bring functionality that actually makes the end users’ job easier. It has to bring enough value to their job that they see the value in using it.

4. At the conclusion of the preliminary investigation, Susan and Gray will deliver a written summary of the results and deliver a brief presentation to Personal Trainer's management team. Prepare a list of recommendations that will help make their written and oral communications more effective. Put your list in priority order, starting with what you consider to be the most important suggestions. Before you complete this task, you should review Part A of the Systems Analyst's Toolkit, which provides suggestions for oral and written presentations.

I would suggest that Susan and Gray deliver a three stage presentation like the Systems Analyst’s Toolkit recommends. The three stages are: the introduction, the information, and the summary. They should define any technical terms, have visual aids, and have a presentation software to demonstrate the potential system’s value. The prepared list of recommendations is as follows:

1. Introduce the ERP system and why it will be of benefit to both them and the company
2. Define for them with examples any “scary” technical terms.
3. Show them a working demo (or pictures of a working similar system from another up and running system) and the day to day functionality that it will bring for them. Demonstrate its value.
4. Start from the bottom up in explaining through examples how first the system will be of benefit to the trainers and receptionists by means of greater organization and data collection. Then, show how that data can be pushed up to the store level management for better store level decisions like inventory and training activities. Continue on to show how even further up the chain the data input by the lower level employees could be utilized for higher level decisions like which training activities are more popular in certain sites. Then show the president that even at the top, this ERP will still have strong benefits in total enterprise analytics, financial modules, HR module, and virtually endless functionality. This system is a top to bottom solution for all of the new problems that will inevitably arise from the new functionality of both the superstore and the enterprise as a whole.
5. Conclude by summarizing how not only will this ERP see a financial return on its investment but more over they will also generate a happier customer base who see more results for their money and work then the competition.