**1. What did you do?**

Our organization is planning to implement an ecommerce website. I evaluated our internal technology and software development capabilities. I then assessed the project requirements. This included the functional requirements, the technical requirements, the security requirements, the operational requirements, and the ongoing support requirements. The functional requirements included definition of what products we wanted to sell, how they should be organized, how they should be presented to users, how the sales transaction should happen, which types of payment we will support, which types of shipping/fulfillment we will support, as well as how the information in the store will be administered and maintained. This also involved identifying our branding and marketing needs and understanding who would be providing image assets and branding guidelines and materials. The technical requirements included assessing where we will host the site, how we will interface with Oracle (our existing material/inventory management system), how we will store transaction data and how online transaction information will be fulfilled. This also included cataloging our internal technical capacity to host the new site including server capacity, database capacity, network capacity, and our ability to quickly adapt to changes in demand. The security requirements included understanding how we would secure customer information including usernames, passwords, personally identifiable information like names and shipping and billing addresses, of course credit card or banking information, and physical security of our network infrastructure. The operational requirement assessment involved looking into datacenter capabilities and capacity of our servers, firewalls, routers, switches, our existing capabilities to segregate the new site from our standard infrastructure, our backup/recovery capabilities, and our disaster avoidance/fault tolerance protections like power and connectivity. This also included assessing our staffing levels and ability to add a new high-availability requirement to the team as well as the ongoing-support capabilities to ramp-up/ramp-down as required.

**2. What were the results?**

I found that our internal capabilities to successfully execute this project are severely lacking. We don’t currently have branding/marketing expertise available that can provide product imagery or branding design for the site. I also uncovered that our existing development capacity for developing a performant, highly-available ecommerce site for the company is severely lacking. Our existing network infrastructure is not well positioned for the additional demand and our existing information security practices are not adequate for the additional attack surface introduced to the company by hosting the ecommerce site into the corporate IT infrastructure. When considering the need for control of the information, the determination was that loosely coupling the site’s order intake mechanism with our corporate order management system will allow the order fulfillment team to fill ecommerce orders in the same way that existing orders are filled. This approach also allows order information and customer analytics to be derived in the same vein as existing systems.

**3. What did you learn?**

I learned that systems that seem relatively straight forward, like an ecommerce website, require a much deeper look at the company’s existing capabilities and that such decisions cannot be taken lightly.

**4. How does it relate?**

In the past I have been faced with decisions like this and I have allowed my personal philosophies regarding self-performance to influence those decisions. On several occasions this has not turned out well. On others it has. This exercise relates because it raises my personal awareness of this bias and forced me to acknowledge it so that I address it in future projects.