BTS 730 - Project Management Methodologies

Lab 2

Authors: Khai Phan (100901164), Marco Rico (111708178), Julian Boyko (111404174)

Read the Opening Case that contains the description of the tablet project.

Assume that you are hired by Seneca College to run the tablet project for its IT department. In particular, you are going to work on the course registration online system. Based on the textbook materials and your knowledge of the college environment, write a brief - paper that will provide your understanding of the above-listed areas of a systematic approach for the college.

**Task 1 (Marco):** Review the picture “Figure 2-1. Three sphere model for systems management”. In the context of the course registration online system, generate and answer the questions similar to ones provided on the picture (to the best of your ability). You can change or create new questions, more applicable to the business case.

**Technology:**

Should the course registration online system be based on Website, app, or another system?

I believe that the majority of students can access the course registration online system from devices that they currently own right now, the best solution would be a website. Website also gives us the flexibility to only have to design one application for all operating systems instead of having a separate application such as an app for each system.

What Applications will be required?

The application that is going to be required is a course registration online system. This is the software that students will be able to log into to create their schedule for school. An example of software that we could include is Destiny One, which is an all in one course registration online system that we could implement into our system for students. It is also very similar to our current system so there should not be too much of a learning curve.

What will the hardware specifications be?

There is really not much we have to add as Seneca already has a major part of the infrastructure for our current course registration online system. Also, because the software is meant for a website, requirements for people’s computers will be very low and students should have no issues using it.

How will the course registration online system affect various networks and speed?

This system will definitely hamper the various networks and speed but because Seneca has already planned for network speed to be used for their current course registration online system, we should only have to make minor changes to it.

What system requirements are needed for the software?

What is needed is a supported browser, which is any major browser available such as Chrome, Firefox, Safari, etc.

**Business:**

What will the course registration online system project cost the college?

When looking at what is required to have a system like this, multiple IT employees are going to have to be trained and ready to operate the system that is implemented. When doing research for the course registration online system, the very limited pricing that I could find online was around 15-30 cents per student per year.

What will it cost students?

The cost to students will be very little and if we go with the 15-30 cents per student per year, students should not see the cost of their tuition rise by any considerable amount.

What will support costs be?

Because we are getting a third party company to do the software, they would be on the hook for support cost as our 15-30 cents per student per year would include that. However, I would believe that our IT may every once in a while need refresher training on the software, so handling that would be a cost.

What will be the impact on enrollments?

The impact on enrollment would be that with the right choice of a course registration online system that is an upgrade to our current system, students would be more pleased with creating their schedule and also less people would sign up in person. This means less faculty needed for helping students and also students have a more positive experience in regards to Seneca.

**Organization:**

Will the course registration online system affect all students, just traditional students, or only certain majors?

This will affect all students as all students need to use the course registration online system.

How will the project affect students who already have tablets or laptops?

The system is going to be designed so that you can access the course registration online system from any device you have that has a supported browser, this way there will be added limitations to anyone trying to use the software.

Who will develop the course registration online system?

The current option that we are looking at is the Destiny One Software. They will handle everything as the software is cloud based and has great support. We will also be able to add or remove features to match the needs of our students and faculty.

Who will train students, faculty, and staff?

The people at Destiny One software have great guides for helping people easily learn anything they do not know and want to know about the software. For our employees, IT at Destiny One has great seminar type online resources that will help and train employees to work with the software, they also have great customer support in case any issues arise.

**Task 2 (Khai):** Review the picture Figure 2-3. It presents 3 major types of organizational structure. Review the explanation and decide what structure applies to Seneca as an organization. Justify your answer. Take into account that people from the IT department whose primary responsibility is IT system management can be engaged for teaching.

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**Organizational Structure:**

* At Seneca, the organization will be more likely to be Matrix (a mix between Functional and Project, where each person in the department would report the status to the Project Manager and Project Manager will report that to the Program Manager). As an IT system management themselves, they are the sources that functional employees will report the information to and as an IT teacher, they are also under the management of another manager. Employees at Seneca when involved at the IT department are not only responsible for managing the system but also have to provide teaching skills in class when necessary. As of that, when hiring full-time staff for IT system management, they can also participate in other roles when not required to manage the system.
* For example, employees who implement the system should report when necessary to the Project Manager, and since the system will have multiple functionalities (register students to a class, check if class is available and still have seats, login,...), all Functional Manager will be under control of Program Manager
* The Functional Structure could have appeared in some college and university, but not at Seneca because most professors can be involved in different projects like IT software development as well as teaching projects (while it is almost impossible to have a professor teaching in multiple faculty). For Project Structure, since there are multiple project going on, there has to be a seperate level of operation to handle all Project Manager

**Task 3 (Julian):** Review the section “The context of Information Technology projects” materials. It addresses several aspects and issues of current IT project development. Think about its relevance to the course registration online system. Provide an answer by commenting on ONE of the topics listed below (free form text):

* Globalization (do you see any aspects of globalization for the course registration online system?)
* Outsourcing (would you suggest outsourced development? Why? In what part?)

The course registration online system is a crucial part of how Seneca operates and manages its business. Having a proper registration system in place allows Seneca to save money by having students enrol themselves without the assistance of staff members manually enrolling individuals in classes. In addition to that, it also provides students with greater accessibility and management over their studies. Outsourcing the development of the course registration online system could have many benefits and it’s important to note that outsourcing the development doesn't necessarily mean offshoring the development.

Offshoring is a type of outsourcing that takes place when a company chooses to outsource its work to another country, which can create a plethora of potential issues. If you offshore you may experience issues like different time zones, communication issues and cultural differences. But just because you outsource, doesn’t mean you have to offshore. What this means is that you are able to outsource locally, for example, to a development firm in the same country that you operate in, like Canada. This is very beneficial, as the people to whom you are outsourcing to may already have experience with Canadian Colleges and may already have an understanding of how a course registration system should work, and what would make it successful.

In the past year, the Seneca online course registration system has become much better than it was two years ago, but it still has problems from time to time, and Seneca could greatly benefit from outsourcing the project. Some of the benefits that Seneca could see from outsourcing the project would be for one, reduced costs. Keeping programmers in-house requires paying for office spaces, computers and software which is far more costly than hiring contract workers to work from home who already have all the equipment they need. In addition to that, since online course registration doesn’t generally change because it’s functionality is relatively static, Seneca would benefit from hiring contract workers versus keeping a team in-house for the project. Although there are benefits to outsourcing the development of the system, there are some downsides that must be taken into account. The project manager taking over the project would have to be able to properly manage a virtual team. Considering that the staff are not in-house, it may be difficult at first to get over the obvious communication problems that may arise.

In conclusion, considering that the online registration is a system that is static and generally doesn’t change, I think Seneca could benefit greatly by outsourcing the project, resulting in reduced costs.