Pre-Requisites for Effective MIS

1. Qualified systems and management staff

The pre requisite of effective MIS is that it should be manned by qualified officers. These officers (experts) should understand clearly the views of their fellow officers.

For this, organisational management base should comprise of two categories of officers viz:

1. Systems and computer experts; and

2. Management experts.

Systems and computer experts in addition to their expertise in their subject area, they should also be capable of understanding management concepts to facilitate the understanding of problems faced by the concern. They should also be clear about the process of decision making and information requirements for planning and control functions.

Management experts should also understand quite-clearly the concepts and operations of a computer. This basic knowledge of computers will be useful to experts and will place them in comfortable position, while working with systems, technicians in designing or otherwise, of the information system.

The pre-requisite is confronted with a problem, viz., procurement of suitable experts. This problem is dealt by recruiting fresh candidates and developing them to meet specific requirements. Also, it is difficult to retain such experts on long term basis as their status in the job market is quite high.

2. Control and maintenance of MIS

Control of the MIS means the operations of the system as it was designed to operate. Sometimes, users develop their own procedure or short cut methods to use the system which reduces its effectiveness. To check such habits of users, the management at each level in the organisation should device checks for information system control.

Maintenance is closely related to control. There are times when the need for improvement to the system will be discovered. Formal methods for changing and documenting changes must be provided.

3. Common data base

It is an integrated collection of data and information which is utilised by several information sub-systems of an organisation. A common data base may be defined as a super-file which consolidates and integrates data records formerly stored in memory separate data files.

Such a data base can be organised as an integrated collection of data records into a single super-file or it can be organised as an integrated collection of several data files. The organisation of a common data base allows it to be accessed by several information sub-systems and thus, eliminates the necessity of duplication in data storage, updating, deletion and protection.

The problems which are usually observed during the stages of creating a common data base in an existing organisation are as follows:

(i) Maintenance of common data base performance.

(ii) Maintenance at data records and accessibility of common data base.

(iii) Keeping the common data base adoptable.

(iv) Organizing data in common data base.

(v) Maintenance of common data base security.

Normally, the data base is sub-divided into the major information sub-sets needed to run a business.

These sub-sets are:

(i) Vendor file

(ii) Personnel file

(iii) Inventory file

(iv) General ledger account of file

(v) Container and sales file

The main characteristics of data base are that each sub-system utilizes same data and information kept in the same file to satisfy its information needs.

The other important characteristics of data base are as follows:

(i) Its act of being used as a common data source, to various users, helps in avoiding duplication of efforts in storage and retrieval of data and information.

(ii) It is available to authorised persons only.

(iii) It is controlled by a separate authority established for the purpose known, as data base management system.

(iv) It is users-oriented.

The maintenance of data in data base requires computer hardware, software and experienced computer's professionals. In addition it requires a good data collection system equipped with experts who have firsthand knowledge of the operations of the company and its information needs.

The data base structured on above lines is capable of providing/ meeting information requirements of its executives, which is necessary for planning, organizing and controlling the operations of the business concern. But it has been observed that such a data base meets the information needs of control.

4. Evolution of MIS

An effective MIS should be capable of meeting the information requirements of its executives in future as well. This capability can be maintained by evaluating the MIS and taking appropriate timely action.

The evolution of MIS should take into account the following points:

1. Ascertaining the views of users and the designers about the capabilities and deficiencies of the system.

2. Guiding the appropriate authority about the steps to be taken to keep the effectiveness of MIS alive.

3. Examining whether enough flexibility exists in the system, to cope up with any expected information requirement in future.

5. Support of top management

For a management information system to be effective, it is essential that it must receive the full support of top management.

The reasons for this are as follows:

1. Subordinate managers are usually lethargic about activities which do not receive the support of their superiors (top management).

2. The resources involved in computer based information system are large and are growing larger and larger in view of importance gained by management information system.

To gain the support of top management, the officers should place, before top management, all the supporting facts and state clearly the benefits which will accrue from it to the organisation. This step will certainly enlighten management and will change their attitude towards MIS. Their whole hearted support and co-operation will help in making MIS an effective and successful one.