WEEK FOUR

**Project Identification And Selection**

A system project begins with the recognition of a need of problem. Once a problem is brought to light, the analyst must begin planning the steps required to reach a solution to the problem.

Project identification and selection consists of three principle activities.

* 1. Identifying potential development projects
  2. Classifying and ranking projects
  3. Selecting projects for development

1.) **Identifying Potential Development Project:- Request for Service**

The first communication of a problem or need to the information system staff is the request for services. This can be performed by:-

* A key member of top management. These projects must have a strategic organizational focus.
* A steering committee composed of a cross section of managers with an interest in the systems. They more often reflect the diversity of the committee and therefore have a cross-functional focus. The top management and steering committees are likely to have a broader understanding of overall business objectives and constraints and therefore projects identified by them reflect broader needs of the organization. They are referred to as coming from top-down source.
* User departments, in which either the head of the department decides which project to submit. Most often they have a narrow, tactical focus and are developed faster. Have a characteristics of ease in integration with existing systems focus, e.g. hardware. There are fewer development delays and less concern or cost benefit analyst.

The last two categories are generally referred to as coming from a bottom-up source. These are the types of projects in which the analyst will have the earliest role in the life cycle as part of the on-going support for users.

2.) **Classifying and Ranking the IS Development Projects**

This involves assessing the relative merit of potential projects and removing those deemed to be inconsistent with overall organizational objectives, redundant in functionality to some existing system or unnecessary. The same people involved in project identification can also do classifying and ranking.

**Possible evaluation criteria when classifying and ranking**.

* Value Chain Analysis – Extent to which activities add value and costs when developing products and/or services. Usually also includes a comparison with the activities, added value, and costs of other organization for the purpose of making improvement in the organization’s operation and performance.
* Strategic Alignment: Extent to which the project viewed as helping the organization achieves its strategic objectives and long-term goals.
* Potential Benefits:- Extent to which the project is viewed as improving profits, customer services, etc and the duration of these benefits.
* Resource Availability:- Amount and type of resources the project requires and their availability.
* Project Size/ Duration:- Number of individuals and the length of time needed to complete the project.
* Technical Difficulty/Risk:- Level of technical difficulty to successful complete the project within given time and resource constraints.

3.) **Selecting IS Development Projects**.

This is the process of considering both short and long term projects and selecting those likely to achieve business objectives. Numerous factors must be considered when making project selection decision *ie* perceived needs of the organization, existing systems and on-going projects, resource availability, evaluation criteria, and current business conditions.

Outcomes can occur from this decision, including; accept project, or reject. Accepting the project implies that funding for the next phases of SDLC have been approved. There may also be conditional acceptance or requests asked to modify and resubmit their requests making suggested changes and modifications.

A selected project does not necessarily result in a working system due to the principle of incremental commitment, where the project is reviewed after each phase and continuation of the project is rejustified in each of these review since business conditions can change.