

## **STRATEGIC FIT OF MIS PLAN WITH ORGANISATION CULTURE – A MILESTONE IN ORGANISATIOAL SUCCESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

MIS planning is a strategic activity. It is to plan and develop the MIS as well as to plan the activities to be undertaken in MIS. MIS planning is to develop almost from insignificant availability of resources – nothing else than a data base system. It is strategic because it is to cater to the needs of a developing system, changing system, and growing system. In this work an effort is taken to survey the development of information system plan. An approach has been made to outline the development of stage model of information system growth plan. Also it has been tried to establish the effectiveness of this plan once it is harmonised with organisation culture existing in the organisation. Organisation culture, which has been tried to establish in this work, is an essence in the process of generation of uniqueness of an organisation and the MIS planning need to be synthesised with this aroma.

Information processing is a major societal activity. A significant part of an individual's working and personal time is spent recording, searching for and absorbing information. As much as 80 percent of a typical executive's time is spent in processing and communication of information. More than 50 percent of the United States workforce is employed in jobs that primarily involve some form of information processing.

The focus of this work is MANAGEMENT INFORMATION PROCESSING (MIS) rather than routine data processing. MIS is in fact broad concept and its activities are highly integrated with people related activities of the organisation. In planning MIS activities goals, objectives of organisation are carefully analysed and it is taken care that MIS goals and activities are in line with goals and objectives of organisation as well as its members.

### **What is Mis ?**

There is no consensus on the definition of the term "Management Information System". In this work a commonly used definition on the basis of activities is used. Management Information System, as the term is generally is understood, is an integrated, user machine system for providing information to support operations, management and

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decision making functions of an organisation. The system utilises computer hardware and software; manual procedures; models for analysis; planning; control and decision making; and a database. The fact that it is single, monolithic structure does not mean that the parts fit into an overall design.

The first step in integration of diverse information system applications is an overall information system plan. Even though application systems are implemented one at a time, their decision can be guided by the overall plan, which determines how they fit in with other functions. In essence, the information system is designed as a planned federation of small systems.

MIS is an evolving concept. When the concept of MIS was first introduced, many proponents envisioned a single, highly introduced system that would bring together processing for all organisational functions. Over time, because the single highly integrated system was demonstrated to be too complex to implement, MIS is now that of a federation of subsystems, developed and implemented as needed but conforming to the overall plan, standards and procedures for the MIS.

### **MIS Planning**

The complexity of the information resources environment suggests that planning is vital to success. The type of plan assumed in this work is a comprehensive information resources plan which includes all areas of information handling.

The plan will be referred to as an information system plan, master development plan, or information resources plan. A very important fundamental concept of information system planning is that the organisation's strategic plan should be the basis for MIS strategic plan. Alignment of MIS strategy with organisational strategy is one of the central problems of MIS planning.

### **Contents of Information Master Plan**

The master plan typically has two components - a) a long-range plan for three to five years (or more) or b) a short-range plan for one year. The plan provides a basis for resource allocation and control. The long-range portion provides general guidelines for direction and short-range portion provides a basis for specific accountability as to operational and financial performance.

The master development plan establishes a framework for all detailed information system planning. In general, it contains four major sections:

1. Information system goals, objectives and architecture;
2. Inventory of current capabilities;
3. Forecast of development affecting the plan;
4. The specific plan.

### Three Stage Model of Planning Process

A number of techniques have been proposed for information system planning. A problem is to evaluate the place of a technique in the flow of activities for developing a long-range information plan and long-range information architecture. The three-stage model of information system planning developed by Bowman, Davis and Wetherbe (1983) clarifies the basic planning activities, the order of activities and alternative techniques and methodologies that apply.

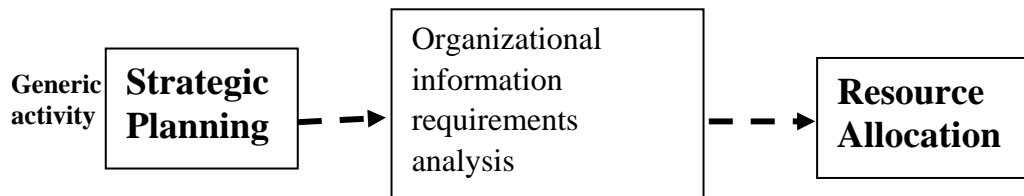


Figure-1 Three stage model of information system planning process

### Strategic Planning Stage

The objectives of the strategic planning stage of information system planning are to create objectives, goals and strategies that align with the organisations objectives, goals and strategies. Four techniques useful in this strategic alignment are a) derivation of organisation plan, b) use of strategic grid, c) fit with organisation culture, d) strategic set transformation.

### Strategic Fit with Organisation Culture

Each organisation has its own culture and subunits within the organisation possess their own culture which may be called to be subculture. It may be well articulated or relatively obscure. Strategic planning need to be in line with organisation culture. It should not be alienated from the cultural trend existing in the organisation.

### Changing Trend of Organisational Cultural and MIS Plan

In fact the concept of culture and clarification of its nature is not an idle academic pursuit. It has practical relevance. Along with developing the concept of culture, it requires to know what needs to be changed for culture to change. In fact in the perspective of organisational activities, culture is a peculiar phenomenon. It is commonly agreed that in organisation culture exists and it is a useful concept. But fewer agree on exactly what it is. According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), "Culture consists of explicit and implicit, of and for acquired and transmitted by symbols, consisting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artefacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (historically derived and selected) and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as product of action, on the other as conditioning element of future action." This idea of culture includes from many different approaches.

In general, definitions of culture to deal primarily either with the way we act or the way we think. At one extreme, culture may be defined as, “the way we do things around here.” Deal T. E. and Kennedy A. A. (1982) At the other end it may be defined as, “the way we think about things around here or the fabrics of meaning with which human beings interpret their experience and guide their actions”, Geertz C. (1973) . Between these extremes, some authors have defined culture in terms of both thought and behaviour. An example would be, “the commonly shared beliefs, values and characteristic patterns of behaviour that exist within an organisation.” Margulis N. Raia A. P. (1978) Practical managers tend to view culture primarily in terms of behaviour. Managers are primarily interested in making practical change in people’s work, goals, method, and behaviours. By contrast academicians tend to view culture primarily in cognitive terms. Academicians are generally more concerned with “why culture changes?” than with “why change culture?” Deal and Kennedy (1982) and Peters and Waterman (1982) have made statements about the nature of organisation culture mainly based on statements of CEOs and senior executives of large multinational organisations; these interesting executive stories are probably truly the myths of culture. Many of these cultural statements are more the products of corporate PR machine. Schein E. H. (1985) has defined culture as an unconscious and largely invisible entity which by definition is almost to measure, study or change. Aspects of culture are unconscious and in a sense invisible.

Advanced research shows that one needs to define culture as unconscious and invisible - culture are commonly held and relatively stable beliefs, attitudes and values that exist within the organisation. This may be considered to be the working definition of culture. Culture thus may be thought as “the way people think about things around here”.

Our working definition identifies an entity that clearly impacts upon organisation effectiveness. That is defined in this way; culture is tied to behaviour and consequently is of practical relevance. Culture is capable of change and it can be empirically studied. Further emphasis upon beliefs, attitudes and values as the major elements of culture enables us to draw upon previous empirical research on the nature of belief, attitude and value formation and change in developing our understanding of culture and the ways in which it can be changed.

### **Mechanism of Change in Organisation Culture and MIS Plan**

Changes in organisation culture take place in many cases during implementation of strategic changes. It is likely to be the self – sealing, embedded product of past strategy and, unless carefully managed, will act to negate any future strategy which requires a major change in the way people think or do things around.

Organisation culture undergoes change when common beliefs, attitudes and values that exist when organisation is subjected to change.

In case studies conducted in organisations subjected to cultural change it has been observed that cause of cultural change appears to be because of six reasons, namely, by changing people in the organisation; by changing position of people in organisation;

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by changing beliefs, attitudes, values directly; by changing behaviour; by changing the systems and structure; and changing the corporate image.

Hence goals, objectives and strategy of information systems should fit with the culture in order to avoid high resistance and high risk of failure. If the culture is not clear to information systems planners, clues can be obtained from sources such as i) Stories, ii) Meetings, iii) Top management behaviour, iv) Physical layout, v) Ritual, vi) Documents. These clues can be organised into rules of the game and classified into organisational tasks and relationships. The fit between culture and proposed information system plan can be assessed. Explicit decisions can be made to ignore the culture (not favourable), drop the strategy, seek a better fitting strategy or plan (most difficult) actions to change.

### Conclusion

The complexity of the information resources environment suggests that planning of MIS is vital to success of an organisation. The development of an information plan for information resources is a vital of a good management. There are variety of approaches to organise planning. The approach chosen should include appropriate participation and review by the organisation to ensure that the plan meets organisational needs and that it has organisational support.

The cultures of different organisations differ with respect to the value attached to data and information; these also differ with respect to data discipline. Even differences in accuracy can be observed within the organisation.. Accounting has a higher level of accuracy than sales, which reflects not only data processing system but also training, and culture of the function. Accountants have a culture which emphasises accuracy (reinforced by training and “ tales of finding the function of a rupee error”); sales person have a culture that focuses on the sales, without concern for even several hundred rupees – planning needs to take care of this.

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