Chapter I

Managing Corporate Information Systems Evolution and Maintenance

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ABSTRACT

Five key management considerations center on a basic fact—managers manage people in getting things done. As they manage the people in getting information systems evolution and maintenance done, the managers address many concerns arising from the interests of the corporation and the stakeholders involved in the information systems. One of the two major groups of stakeholders is the people who use and work with the information systems, that is, the systems’ customers. The suppliers are the other group and consist of the corporation’s information systems personnel and the supporting vendors. Fifteen of the many concerns arising from the interests of the stakeholders are introduced in this chapter to provide context for the subsequent chapters in this book. This chapter concludes by noting the critical success factor role of leadership in the management of information systems evolution and maintenance.

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this chapter is to provide a foundation and context for the subsequent chapters in this book. This objective is actualized through a set of secondary objectives. They are to introduce at a high level:
• Five key management considerations,
• Fifteen relevant management concerns, and
• Leadership in information systems evolution and maintenance.

Subsequent chapters in this book address at a more detailed level selected aspects of some of these considerations and concerns, and some of the connections among them.

In this chapter, the terms “corporate” and “corporation” are used more broadly than fit the strict legal definitions. Instead, they are used as a brief way of referring to any human organization of people operated by those same people to accomplish some human objectives or goals, and using a computer for implementing at least one information system. Thus for example in this chapter, a “corporation” might be a governmental taxing agency, or a manufacturer, or a barber shop, or a multinational financial institution, or the Red Cross, or a grocery retailer, or the European Union (EU), or an auditing firm, or a coffee plantation, and so forth.

KEY MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Information Systems

Managing corporate information systems evolution and maintenance is a major variant of the more general process of managing systems evolution and maintenance, or of managing information and communication technologies and their use. Managing corporation information systems evolution and maintenance includes major aspects of computing management and software management. This key management considerations section of this chapter overviews the general process of managing systems evolution and maintenance. With some specific attention to information systems, this major section is organized around five key management considerations:

• Who or what is doing the managing?
• When and where is the management done?
• What is being managed?
• Why is the management done? That is, what are the goals or ends of the management?
• How is the management done?

A non-rigorous definition of “information systems” can help bound the domain of discourse. Information systems are a form of systems. In general, a system is an interacting combination of components. An example of a natural system is the solar system. For our purposes here, natural systems are of less interest than systems created by human beings (people) for human purposes. An example is the system of justice under the Napoleonic code. Because of the historic advances in technology, the human-created systems of current interest have machine or hardware components. An example is the television system used in the United Kingdom.

Because people use languages and have implemented ways of writing those languages using symbols as a way of expressing information, of special interest here are information systems. An example is an inventory control system. To be a little more
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