Chapter 14
E-Novation Program Office and Roadmap: Pathway to Achieving E-Novation in Government

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ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces a new organizational entity for government organisations, the E-Novation Program Office (EPO). The basis for this structure is researcher experiences of the divide between organizational decision-making capability and the actual delivery of innovation using new technology initiatives within Australian organizations. Key EPO decision-making mechanisms include cognitive mapping, road maps, scenario planning, and complexity thinking. The proposed model of the EPO is informed through author experiences within a variety of Australian organisations and government enterprises focusing on technological innovation rather than other forms of innovation. The EPO serves to guide innovative actions, prioritization of effort, and better execution by acting as a counterbalance between technology, strategy, and delivery to ensure the successful introduction of innovation. The robustness, flexibility, and adaptability of the EPO arises from modeling processes arising from research in the governance of enterprise wide service orientated architectures for information systems. The EPO explicitly supports the central tenant of government organisations, the provision of service to citizens. Most importantly, service is taken to be the provision of knowledge and skills (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) for the benefit of citizens.

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INTRODUCTION

Based on first hand experience from eight cases comprising technology projects in a major Australian retailer, an investment bank, building society, semi-autonomous state government utility, government department, small software vendor, wine distributor and professional services organization the authors consistently witness dysfunctional behavior between “thinking” and “doing” amongst the 3 key areas of technology, business and delivery (project management) of new initiatives. Delivery relates to promoting, governing and managing innovations at a variety of levels through changes in process, product or service using project management techniques. An E-novation program office (EPO) provides the catalyst to ensure a smooth introduction of innovative technology driven ideas as well as the reuse of existing assets contributing to service (Vargo & Lusch, 2004).

Setting up an EPO assists by acting as a change agent mechanism to ensure harmony of business strategy, technology and project management through providing decision making tools and feedback to each impacted area, supporting well empowered cross functional teams, a knowledge base informing relevant stakeholders of best practice, success stories and the provision of further knowledge and specialized skills supporting related projects.

The objectives of this chapter are to:

1. Describe the research method underpinning the notion of the EPO
2. Share a vision of Government E-novation
3. Describe the EPO
4. Key steps to implementation
5. Conclusion and future opportunities

RESEARCH METHOD

Owing to the role of the researchers as consultants within existing workplace technology projects the overarching research method is ethnographic fieldwork. The ethnography is supported by triangulation of note taking, hand drawn maps of meeting interactions, digital photographs, analysis of existing documents and review of intranet sites. A special purpose instrument frequently used by project managers “the project post implementation review” (PIR) helps uncover key issues, lessons learnt and contributions from stakeholders with respect to the delivery of projects associated with innovation. Weekly debriefing meetings between researchers cover the sharing of stories on insights, emergent theories, relationships, hunches and potential implications of observations in shaping recommendations. An individual organization, although multiple site visits take place is treated as an individual case.

Each organization or case is found to exhibit idiosyncrasies with the common theme witnessed first hand by the researchers within cases and across cases when introducing new ideas is consistent no matter the industry. A lack of synchronicity amongst the 3 areas results in projects inevitably failing to meet business objectives and an inability to create cultural change to embrace innovation.

The key recommendation emergent from research insights is obtained through going backwards and forwards between the data collection, interpretation and researcher conjectures and insight. This method is best described as the informal execution of grounded theory. The actual recommendation flowing from the approach is the creation of a new organizational entity to reduce dissonance in strategy, design and operation of technological innovation.

Further, the research findings from the ethnographic interpretations and follow up storytelling by the researchers in the organisations under study informs the most efficient and effective introduc-
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