Chapter 7

ERP Implementation in Higher Education: An Account of Pre-Implementation and Implementation Phases

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems long have been known as systems that bring integration to numerous business activities within complex organizations. However, in today’s contemporary organizations, ERP systems are becoming a standard information system, irrespective of size and nature of the business. This case focuses on the implementation of an ERP system in higher education. The case covers the key stages of implementation. Particular emphasis is placed on the selection of the ERP system and the organizational dynamics involved. The implementation of the first two modules and the views of users are discussed. The depth of the case can enable managers to understand the complexity of an ERP system selection and the organizational issues involved. The analysis of the case sheds light on the activities involved in ERP projects and what to expect during the implementation stage.

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ERP Implementation in Higher Education

ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Agora University

This case is about an ERP implementation effort at Agora University, a private co-educational university in the midwest USA (see Table 1). While the following school statistics might seem impressive, they only reflect the challenges facing the university in order to maintain high standards and to remain competitive. There must be continuous efforts to ensure that the university remains in the league of best universities without putting undue financial burden on the students. As with any organization, the most viable solution is to improve efficiency and to lower cost through an improvement of internal operations.

The University is headed by a president and supported by seven vice presidents:

- The Academic Vice President and Provost heads up all academic and faculty affairs.
- The Senior Vice President for Financial Administration heads up the human resources and financial affairs areas.
- The Vice President for Mission and Ministry is responsible for mission and ministry and promotion of the Jesuit tradition of the university.
- The Administrative Vice President is responsible for government and community relations.

Table 1. Organizational background, Agora University

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<td>-Private, coeducational university located in the midwest USA</td>
<td>-6,668 total students</td>
<td>-Annual budget of $108 million</td>
<td>-College of Arts and Sciences</td>
<td>-U.S. News &amp; World Report’s America’s Best Colleges issue ranks Agora in the top 10 among 142 master’s-level colleges and universities in the midwest.</td>
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<td>-Provides a liberal arts education in the Catholic, Jesuit tradition</td>
<td>-3,943 undergraduates</td>
<td>-Endowment of $94 million</td>
<td>-College of Social Sciences</td>
<td>-Agora has ranked in the report’s top 10 for 10 straight years.</td>
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<td>-The third-largest independent institution in the midwest USA</td>
<td>-2,725 graduate students</td>
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<td>-College of Business</td>
<td>-Agora was named one of the “Best 357 Colleges in America” by The Princeton Review in 2004.</td>
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<td>-48 states represented</td>
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<td>-The College of Business is listed as one of the “Best 143 Business Schools” in the nation, according to The Princeton Review 2005 guidebook of business schools.</td>
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