Chapter X
Business Process Management

ABSTRACT

The chapter seeks to advance the practice perspective of VLITP by drawing attention to individual, collective sub-teams and host organizational sense making. It reveals some of the inner workings of VLITP implementation strategies in practice today and attempts to form the theoretical bases for examining a case for BPM in VLITP implementation situations. The chapter looks at various BPM concepts including BPM practices in project management, since the mid 1990’s, though originating from the early 1920s. It introduces three waves of BPM throughout the years before providing a comprehensive definition of BPM in the VLITP situation.

INTRODUCTION

Information management is a critical tool and probably the most important resource for managing a VLITP. The slogan ‘information resource management’ was at its peak during the early 1990’s, at which time it was based on the axiom that information is an asset with a value, and needed to be managed, like any other asset, to maximise its value across the entire organization (Angell and Smithson, 1991). Currie and Guah (2006) show this principle to still be true for VLITP when managers have the capability to improve the effectiveness of certain part of the project or even
gain some advantage by using additional information. On the other hand, if certain types of information about the project are not available to all project managers the competitive advantage can be transferred to those in position of such information. An example could be that a certain piece of information relating to a crucial stage of the project was only revealed to a limited number of project managers. That strategic decision to exclude the other managers gives the selected few competitive edge and can be described as information resource management.

Mismanaging project information for a VLITP could affect the achievement of its objectives that has been set. This can lead to a course of actions that misinterpret the actual plans and how the management team hope to attain the project goals. Proper planning of VLITP prevent the investment being at the mercy of management whims and external pressures which often leads to VLITPs loosing sight of their objectives. This is an aggregate of the significantly low level of forward planning by businesses against the often far too rigid planning in the public sector. The private sector businesses are content with carrying on operations virtually on a day-to-day basis. On the other hand public service organizations take very little account of likely and possible political and economic changes.

**BUSINESS PROCESS MANAGEMENT**

BPM involves the holistic approach of all systematic attempts to control and improve the implementation of a business process. This is why BPM encompasses optimization of individual activities, optimization of process flow, process change management, and change management for the organizational culture. The IT industry has developed BPM software that is based on the business improvement life cycle. This cycle shows the organizational desire to constantly improve the implementation of the business process. BPM software should in theory enable analysts to model, simulate, deploy, execute, measure the performance, and analyze new process implementations. However this is currently not possible, because the BPM software is not able to change the process flow, which is embedded in the applications. Another problem is that the current modeling environments are too technical for the business process analysts.

BPM is the philosophy of how business processes should be managed. This management is frequently misinterpreted as the streamline of delivering a document to the appropriate recipient (Keen, 2004). Pritchard and Armistead conclude from a series of interviews that managers see BPM as a holistic approach for process performance in the long run including process commitment (Pritchard and Armistead, 1999).
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