The Australasian Food Products Co-Op: A Global Information Systems Endeavour

Hans Lehmann
University of Auckland, New Zealand

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case tells the story of a Food Products Co-op from ‘Australasia’ and their attempt to create a global information system. The Co-op is among the 20 largest food enterprises in the world, and international information systems (IIS) have taken on increasing importance as the organization expanded rapidly during the 1980s and even more so as the enterprise refined their global operations in the last decade. Set in the six years since 1995, the story demonstrates the many pitfalls in the process of evolving an IIS as it follows the Co-op’s global business development. Two key findings stood out among the many lessons that can be drawn from the case: first, the notion of an “information system migration” following the development of the Global Business Strategy of the Multi-National enterprise through various stages; second, the failure of the IIS to adapt to the organization’s strategy changes set up a field of antagonistic forces, in which business resistance summarily killed all attempts by the information technology department to install a standard global information system.