Chapter V

Resistance: A Medium for the Successful Implementation of Technological Innovation

Dianne Waddell
Edith Cowan University, Australia

ABSTRACT

Resistance to change has long been recognised as a critically important factor that can influence the success or otherwise of implementing any technological innovation. Information technology (IT) focused interventions, for example, business process re-engineering (BPR) and enterprise resource planning (ERP), are often quoted as examples of costly failures, with reported levels of dissatisfaction with strategic IT investments ranging from 20-70 percent and that employee resistance was to blame. The intention of this chapter is to rethink resistance. The author suggests that resistance remains to this day a complex, multi-faceted phenomenon that continues to affect the outcomes of change, both negatively and positively. Although research has procured a solid understanding of resistance and the benefits that can accrue to an organisation through its proper utilisation, it appears that the classical adversarial approach remains the dominant means of managing resistance.
because such learning is not reflected in modern management techniques. The author concludes that as companies in every industry are now translating the power and possibilities of e-business into strategic and operational realities, new approaches in change management are required to help organisations to understand the complex dynamics of technological innovation and especially the multifaceted nature of resistance.

INTRODUCTION

While the explosion of Internet-centered business has produced an unrelenting focus on e-commerce strategies, new business models, and processes, surprisingly little attention has been paid to how e-business is changing the competencies needed to manage effectively in this new business environment (Harris, DeLong, & Donnellon, 2001).

Resistance to change has long been recognised as a critically important factor that can influence the success or otherwise of implementing any technological innovation. Research undertaken by Maurer (1996) indicated that one-half to two-thirds of all major corporate change efforts fail and resistance is the “little-recognised but critically important contributor” to that failure (p. 56). The 1990s witnessed the failure of many planned change interventions to achieve their original objectives or realise significant ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ business benefits.

Gardner and Ash (2003) argue that the relatively low level of organisational benefits realized by strategic Information Technology over the past decades is often a product of poor adoption and implementation practices on the part of senior managers and IT practitioners, who have failed to understand the complex and sensitive nature of change in complex organisations. Scott’s study (2002) on insurance companies in particular discovered that they spent hundreds of millions of dollars on the software and hardware of Information Technologies to effect cost controls and operating efficiencies, gain market share, and improve customer service, yet many complain that not enough of these investments show up as return of investment (ROI). Whereas research undertaken by Parker (2002) identifies disappointment with current e-procurement technology, and resistance to change, which are hindering e-business take-up in the manufacturing sector in the UK. Manufacturers have attributed low customers demand, a “wait and see” attitude among management and the desire to wait for improved technology as the main impediments.
Enhancing E-Business on the Semantic Web through Automatic Multimedia Representation
www.igi-global.com/chapter/enhancing-business-semantic-web-through/28895?camid=4v1a