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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PROJECT MANAGEMENT PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

Due to the increase in globalization and advancement of technology all around the world, organizations are implementing latest IT applications in order to enhance their operations and to provide the optimum value to their customers. In order to implement the IT applications, comprehensive project management is conducted by the organizations. Adoption of latest technologies is essential for organizations because it not only enhances the efficiency of the organizations it also strengthens their competitive position in the market. An organization can enjoy competitive advantage against its competitors if it holds exclusive rights to a technology which helps it provide better products or services to the customers.

The nature of the IT projects may differ in accordance with the nature of the business of the organization however the tools used to manage the projects remain the same. While undertaking any project, it is among the priorities of the management of the organization to carry out the project efficiently, within a predetermined amount of time, and within the scope of the available resources. In order to ensure these objectives, the strategic core of the organization uses project management techniques which include extensive planning, systematic breakdown of all the steps to be followed till the completion of the project, and identification of the critical path within the segregated project activities. In the recent past, project management has become more than just a tool for implementation of project. Organizations are resorting to project management as a principle driver of change.

Project management has been bringing out desired results for the organization and so this discipline has been ever so evolving in order to make it more efficient. The aim of this report is to propose the best practices for implementation of an IT project. In order to reach this aim, the report uses an assumed situation and proposes its solution using example of an actual organization that carried out a comprehensive IT project

management in the recent past. The report also highlights the factors that are responsible for IT project failures, anticipated challenges associated with the implementation of the IT project, the success factors essential for the implementation, and the recommendations for the organizations that seek to undertake IT projects.

Scope

This research report covers a wide array of topics associated with the subject of IT project management. IT project management has a wide scope because it involves two distinct subjects, that are, IT and project management. These two disciplines merge to form a bigger subject which includes multiple aspects of an IT project and numerous aspects of project management. This research report covers a number of topics from both the sides of the subject. With regard to IT project, the report includes an analysis of the factors that lead towards failure of IT projects and it also includes an assessment of the factors that lead towards success of IT project. With regard to project management, the report includes an analysis of the factors that are essential for successful project management such as: benchmarking, planning, and continuous evaluation. Apart from the theoretical topics, the report also includes an assumed practical scenario for which the report presents a strategically designed solution.

Significance of the Report

Organizations all around the world are enhancing their operations through implementation of IT projects. This report is highly relevant for such organizations as it highlights the factors that are essential for IT projects and the factors that need to be eliminated. Different organizations have different processes and tools for IT project management, and this report helps in the harmonization of the IT project management process. This report highlights some of the important aspects of project management, such as benchmarking. This aspect of project management is relatively new and it is highly relevant for IT projects as it helps the organizations follow the best practices derived from similar projects undertaken by other organizations. Therefore, this research study would attempt to determine the best practices that can be implemented by an organization to ensure success in IT project management.

Methodology

In order to achieve the purpose of the report, a comprehensive secondary research was carried out. All the data pertaining to the factors causing failures of IT projects,

factors essential for their success, challenges faced in implementation, and the case study of P&G was acquired from secondary sources including books and journal articles. The reliability was checked by the established credibility of the sources. This report places significant reliance upon secondary data therefore it was ensured that the sources for the secondary data were relevant, credible, and reliable.

Factors Causing IT Project Failures

The advantages of an IT application can only be acquired by organizations if the implementation of IT projects is carried out successfully. There are a number of examples of failures of IT projects and the causes for the failures have also surfaced. Following is a brief explanation of some of those causes.

Lack of Strategy and Planning

One of the biggest factors that are directly responsible for the failure of IT projects is lack of comprehensive implementation strategy and planning. This is the most important phase in any IT project and this is the phase that is not given the extent of work it deserves. A number of project managers fail to realize that the success of the IT project management depends upon the effectiveness of the initial strategy and the efficiency of the planning (Southon et al., 1999).

The strategy includes the determination of the overall scope of the project, the direction of the project, the extent of resources that will be applied, and the time period within which the project will be completed. Planning is more comprehensive as compared to development of strategy. The strategy provides the direction for implementation; the plan provides the nature and timing of procedures that will be conducted in order to follow that direction. Therefore, both the strategy and the plan for implementation are integral to the whole project and their determination beforehand can greatly assist in the effective implementation of the new information system. Absence of strategy and planning may lead towards failure of the IT project.