

***“GETTING THEM ON THE BUS”***

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Thanks very much Carole, it is a pleasure to be here.

Today I am going to talk about two key issues that are dear to us all - firstly getting people on the bus in relation to technology projects. And secondly how to we attract and retain staff so you can fill the bus in the first place.

**Globalism brings huge people challenges and opportunities**

In the last few days and in various meetings I have had, it has clearly reinforced to me the challenge of getting people on the bus with software and information management initiatives.

Nowhere is this more difficult than in the growing beasts that are international companies.

We now live in an environment where some companies have greater turnover and assets than some countries. They also have voracious appetites for growth, ever seeking expansion, and seeking to apply their enormous cash reserves for greater than average returns. Acquisitions bring their own issues, and it is certain that project timescales must be shortened to meet the demands of business.

Do you believe the mantra "think global, act local" applies explicitly in relation to software and systems? How do organisations seek to refine the best of the knowledge they have, and best practice into common ways of doing things.

So, there are some barriers to break down:

1 Not invented here. Obvious enough problem... but confounded

further with Point 2.

- 2 The system we use was invented here, in fact, I invented it... compounded further with...
- 3 I like the way our company did things before the takeover... compounded further with...
- 4 Those guys are in another part of the world, and they think differently to us (these types of cultural differences are very real)

As Perth becomes a global centre of excellence for resources, and remains as the engine room of the economy we must remain open to adopt and determine the best way.

**So how do we get people on the bus with technology projects? Via People, process, technology** - they still the 3 keys to successful application development and software implementation projects

If you have found yourself in a situation where the process seems to change, accountabilities are uncertain and deadlines are missing, then perhaps you have a people, process and technology problem. Getting all 3 aligned is absolutely essential to ensuring a change process will work.

And they have to be resolved in that order.

**1. People** - what are the key issues: who owns the process, who is involved, what are their roles, are they committed to improving it and working together and importantly are they prepared to do the work to fix the problem

**2. Process** - a process can be defined as starting with a trigger event that creates a chain of actions that result in something being prepared for a customer of that process.

Starting at high level and identifying the key big steps is important to see the process from end to end. Then moving into more detail to capture the various layers involved and various exceptions is the next step.

Focussing on the high frequency (transactions can have significant benefit to standardising the process. But also remember that it can be the non-standard transactions where service is slipping most or the potential for significant failure in the process may exist.

**3. Technology** - Now that people are aligned, and the

process developed and clarified, technology can be applied to ensure consistency in application of the process and to provide the thin guiding rails to keep the process on track. This makes it easier to follow the process than not do so.

Of course there is much more to getting a technology project right - but get the above 3 sorted out and you will be a long way down the path to project success. If you don't, you are destined for failure.

**I've got to say I have an interesting concern** - but a sense of delight at the possibilities - about the speed and capacity of change of Enterprise 2.0. Let me explain... In the world of application development, there is a serious and mounting argument from the rapid development / iterative prototyping camp versus the waterfall (requirements, design, build, test, deploy, support) purists. When it comes to applications that affect corporations - that is, across the enterprise - I am a firm believer in the latter.

Iterative development is great when there are only a few people involved - or a small point solution is required that only affects a few people. When you start getting more people involved, the challenges go up.

The challenges include:

- **People** - commitment to using a new process and a new underpinning system - and a common way of doing so
- **Process** - is the process we are using common to all? (Do we all do our own thing?)
- **Technology** - solid analysis of the problems and a clear view of how to resolve them with technology

Now with Web 2.0 / Enterprise 2.0, the beauty is that these applications are breaking new ground. They do that by making the process neatly tied within the applications, using tools such as Business Process Execution Language and making it really simple for people to follow the process without having to think too much about it - or having to refer to training manuals or help guides.

However, a big risk exists as it is really easy to pick an application up, configure it to an individual's needs - but at the same time missing the opportunity to apply it consistently across the enterprise.

The takeaway points to consider:

- If you are going to go for a Web 2.0 application, do document your processes and make sure people apply it consistently within the organisation
- Software developers can learn from the myriad of Web 2.0 projects, smart ways of developing inviting interfaces from the very simple and fast "get a free trial account " sign up and use approaches we see in many web 2.0 hosted applications
- The next raft of successful enterprise scale applications from the Web 2.0 environment will make a dent on traditional software only when sold, implemented and supported like enterprise software. This is the approach that has seen Salesforce.com become such a force in the customer relationship management software market.

**So having talked** about getting people on the bus on projects, let's turn to the issue that is driving the market right now - people.

The IT market is an exciting market to be in now - but under enormous pressure. Why? As the availability of people in all types of employment markedly dwindles to practically nothing - and to the extent that daily we hear the sound of the bottom of a barrel being scraped - where do organizations look to eliminate waste and get efficiencies? Process improvement underpinned by new systems.

Great news is that our software development approaches mean that we can get ever more done than ever before, completing projects in a third of the time than previously. What does that do? It actually drives up demand enormously through companies choosing to take on more projects.

But we have a major major roadblock coming - university enrolments in IT fields such as computer science are down about 30% even in the wake of unprecedented industry sector demand. And of those that enroll, around 30% less finish, leading to a massive triple whammy - increased growth, less students starting, and even less students finishing.

The media is to blame as much as the mining industry, and perhaps our own industry as well.

The dot com crash stopped a lot of people who would now

have 6 or 7 years of really good experience from joining the industry. Then we had lots of "IT will all go to Bangalore" stories, which stopped a lot of people with what would be 4 or 5 years of experience.

Now we have a myriad of options for people, not the least of which is avoiding the massive cost of education and going north for a guaranteed six figure gig on a minesite.

Many IT firms in Perth are seeking to grow in the order of 20% annually if not more. The graduate pool will not satiate the demand.

**Fundamental to attracting and retaining talent** is to be very focused on matching a person's career aspirations and the client's needs. You must be a good employer, it goes without saying. The net generation expects what we all expect - a fair go, good opportunities, a company that is focused and going somewhere, flexibility, and that will invest in my future.

Is there a great challenge that this generation is also frankly spoiled? Yes - but there are great, talented people out there who are looking to do great things, and just like Gen x and the baby boomers before them, they want to change the status quo and improve it.

A survey released yesterday by Sensis indicates that most small business owners really don't want to employ Gen y staff, citing reliability, frequent job changing, and lack of commitment to work as key issues. They prefer the loyalty and work ethic of the baby boomers and gen x, at the expense of the latest knowledge from university.

Our experience is that staff will move if they are not valued - and that applied to any segment. However if you can tap into what they are chasing, you will get very highly motivated and quality output, and solid contributors.

What has also emerged in recent times is that money has become the primary motivator for seeking a job role change, where in the past it has sat around the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> consideration. Expect to see a big lift in 2008 of people changing roles, and much more of your time spent retaining

your staff. Don't bank on 5 or 6% lifts in costs, we are seeing in excess of 20 and 30% lifts in many cases.

**This year** has also been an interesting year to come to grips with the social networking arena, including such facets as wiki's, web 2.0 and phenomena such as facebook, linked in, and blogging.

At the start of the year I really had not much of an idea about it at all, but was convinced by a colleague to start blogging as a way of finding it out. I always thought that bloggers were vain nerds with no friends. Having become one - a blogger that is - it has been really interesting, and also starts to make connections with other likeminded people around the world. In fact this talk is a collection of blog posts with a slight rewrite. We also started a blog for our staff to collaborate on and that has worked very well.

If you feel that this area is completely foreign to you, and particularly you see no sense in it, then I highly recommend you read wikinomics. One of the areas it talks about is the online social phenomena and how it has allowed people with common interests to connect all over the globe. So, your current smart university graduate is likely to have established an international network that he or she keeps in regular contact with via instant messaging, plus using tools such as Facebook to connect and pose questions.

Online collaboration is an expectation, having invested a lot of time in creating a network. Companies that have no direction in this area, or lock off tools such as skype, just simply won't appeal to this group. This is a group that draws upon its own wider network wherever they may be to solve problems.

IN summary

1. Getting people on the bus around a technology project is a combination of people, process and technology, and in that order. Get people on board with your thinking, bring them along for the decision to change. Get a clear understanding of the end to end business process, and make sure that is agreed with your people. You then stand a chance for technology project success.

2. Appealing and retaining people comes from being intently interested in the staff that choose to join your business and why they do so. Work hard to connect their vision and goals for themselves to your projects, and treat and pay them well. Leadership in this environment is a bit like being first amongst equals, and you need to keep earning the right to lead. Make no mistake, 2008 will be a year where staff retention and acquisition will be top of mind for all.

Finally, I challenge you to take 2008 and really think big. If technology projects were treated like companies invested in by a venture capital firm, 5 would be fairly certain, 2 would be average bets, 2 would be disasters and 1 would be a real differential sky rocket - plenty of risk but amazing reward. We look forward to helping you get there.