INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENGINEERING AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

www.scienceandnature.org

TRANSITION FROM PHYSICAL ORGANIZING TOOL TO DIGITAL COLLABORATION TOOL: A CASE STUDY ON SHUCHITA PRAKASHAN PRIVATE LIMITED

Tiwari Devendra Kumar

Assistant Professor & Head of Department (BBA),United Institute of Management, Allahabad

Corresponding Author's E-mail: dktresearch@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present business environment is very complex where efforts of all the members collectively is important in making the activities successful. The challenge is to coordinate the tasks of all members of the team in an organized manner so that the organisation can achieve its intended objectives. The physical organizing tools, in the form of diary or other formats, have been used for long time in business organisations to coordinate the various activities. With the increase in business needs these tools needed to be technically upgraded. The Shuchita Prakashan Private Limited is a growing organisation in Allahabad in the field of providing text books and other study materials for professional examinations. This organisation has used a physical diary as organizing tools for all most ten years. In due course of time, the SPPL learnt that this physical diary needs to be transformed into digital diary. The SPPL developed its digital collaborative tool which included all the features of its physical organizing tool. The transition was expected to be easy but it had some issues which made it a challenging one. The present study is a case study on the transition process from manual organizing tool to digital collaborative tool in SPPL. The study method used is mainly the employee interviews and organizational document examination. The study highlighted the challenges faced and the solutions used for smooth transition.

KEYWORDS: Physical Organizing tool, Digital Collaborative Tool, Transition

INTRODUCTION

This is a case study which attempts to understand transition process from manual organizing tool to a digital collaboration tool in SPPL. The company, SPPL (Shuchita Prakashan Private Limited), introduced later in this paper, has been successfully using a physical manual diary for organizing and monitoring the activities of its employees for more than 10 years. With worldwide development in technology and increase in its own business complexity due to increasing business dimensions, it decided to introduce a digital collaboration tool in place of the manual diary so that new challenges of organizing and collaboration are met in better way. This paper studies the process of transition of Manual Diary into a Digital Collaboration tool. Digital collaboration tool is an in-house developed Groupware that integrates the various processes of SPPL and makes the organisation work better. Before the challenges and solutions of the transitions are studied, the paper will introduce the Physical Organizing Tool (manual diary) and digital collaboration tool in brief.

Physical organizing Tool (Manual Diary)

It is a monthly diary which had been in use as a physical organisation tool for more than ten years. It included tools for managing daily, weekly and monthly tasks. The employees were issued with monthly diary at the beginning of the month. They needed to enter the necessary details to prepare for the monthly use. It has planning tools for each day, week, and month or even for subsequent months. The appointments and task logs were made on page meant for daily activities. It included a place to review the tasks performed on each day in last fifteen minutes and then plan for the next day accordingly and prioritize the tasks.

Digital Collaboration Tool

The Digital collaboration tool includes all the facilities available in the monthly diary system**.** It has a log-in panel. Each employee in the organisation has been provided with the log-in id and according to the responsibility and requirement; the level of system authorization is defined. Therefore, permission for system is different for different employees. The Log-in panel of the system is not only meant to authenticate the user for accessing the digital system but it also serves as to mark the attendance of each employee. The first log-in by any employee is taken as his arrival for duty and the last log-off as departure from the duty. It has different panels to support task management and reporting on tasks. Unlike the physical diary system, this does not require any kind of preparation by the employee at the beginning of month. The work flow has been efficiently supported. The status of task completion is easy to monitor by the superiors. Thus digital collaborative tool has better

capabilities in terms of coordination of different employees and their tasks.

Need for Change

Business complexities keep on increasing with the increase in size and magnitude of the business. It becomes difficult and at some point of time even inefficient to keep track of all the activities using the manual organisation system. This necessitates to adopt new technology and automated systems to organize and collaborate the complex business activities. Moreover, the change is inevitable and one need to remain updated with the technological advancements to remain competitive in the business.

Need for study the Transition

The realization and acceptance for change at top level does not guarantee a smooth change from the current system. There may be issues associated with the employees, existing working environment and the organisation which may pose difficulties in the transition system. Some of the issues may be genuine and other may not be; but it is essential to understand each of such issue that may hamper proper transition. Inadequate handing of these issues may fail the transition process and the objective of the organisation may be defeated. Thus there is a need to study the transition challenges and issues and to formulate proper procedure for the transition.

COMPANY PROFILE

Shuchita Prakashan Private Limited (SPPL), is a reputed company for publishing and marketing the study material for various professional examinations such as CA, CS & ICWA across the India. SPPL started its journey in 1991 as M/S ShuchitaPrakashan, with a very small assets and infrastructure. It was incorporated on 14th January 1993 to its present name as "ShuchitaPrakashan Private Limited". The business started with a single cyclostyle machine. The unsolved question papers and their answers were handwritten and cyclostyled for distribution to candidates for the preparation of CA examination. In due course of time, the company developed itself as an effective organisation in providing study material for professional examinations like CA, CS and ICWA. It started publishing its inherent books under the name "Scanner". Sooner the "Scanner" became the brand name in the field of providing study material for CA, CS and ICWA. "Scanner" books are systematic inherent books, which includes unsolved questions arranged chapter wise with net answers of various professional examinations specially CA,CS & ICWA. After establishing itself with "Scanner", the company started publishing text books on different subjects related to these professional examinations. After few years, the company innovated with the publishing of all its inherent books as "Green Edition" which are the books at the lowest price rate.

Today, the SPPL has five sister concerns with diversified business arena. It is an ISO 9001:2008 certified company which is fully computerized and ERP implemented. The company is registered with Small Scale Industries, Govt. of India and is a member of Eastern U.P. Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The company has a business growth of more than 250 times from the year 1992 to 2015. It has increased its customers from mere few students of Allahabad in 1993 to lacs of students across India. It also increased its published material from only few question papers of CA examinations to different kinds of help and study material for different professional examinations with regular edition and green edition both.

The SPPL innovated monthly diary system for organizing and coordinating the work processes. The monthly diary was used successfully for more than ten years and then company introduced its in-house developed Groupware as a "Digital Collaborative Tool". The manual diary has been replaced with this digital collaborative tool. This case study is intended to understand the transition process from Monthly diary to Digital Collaboration Tool.

STUDY METHOD

As a case of studying the process of transition from manual tool to digital collaborative tool, the study examines the real challenges the organisation faced during the transition and the ways it find to solve these challenges. This organisation has been selected for study to understand the transition when organisation has already been using manual organizing tool and then it developed its own collaborative tool for better performance. It seems there should not be any problem in transition process.

The primary method used for this case study is personal interviews of the employees. A semi structured interview technique with both open and closed ended questions has been used to get the information. The interview was conducted by the researcher himself and verbatim notes were recorded. The IT Manager, senior managers including all department heads and other 25 workers were interviewed. The information was systematically verified. Apart from interviews, organizational documents related to task management were examined. This eradicated the subjective nature of data collected through the personal interviews.

THE STUDY OF TRANSITION PROCESS

Based on the data collected on the transition process, the information has been described under the following headings:

Challenges of Transitions

The transition from a manual system to a digital system need to be studied in light of its challenges and issues. The challenges are the obstacles in realizing the benefits of new change implementation. These can be associated at three levels: Employee issues, Working Environment issues and the Organisational challenges. The employees may resist to change due to some real or non-real issues. The existing working environment has to be adequately adjusted to accommodate the new technological changes. This adjustment may again have some challenges. At the organisational level, the major challenge is to plan for the transition and coordination of activities is such a way that does not only ensure the existing performance level but also helps to achieve the better performance levels in times to come. There may be requirement of adjustment in authority-

responsibility relationship. All these issues are needed to be systematically studied before going to effect the change.
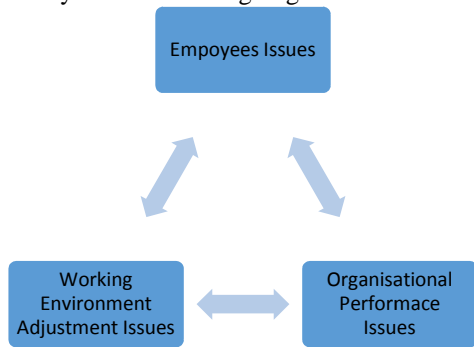

Exhibit 1: Interrelation of three levels of challenges in Transition process

Awareness for Change

The greater challenge is to make the employees at all levels realize that there is a requirement of change from the present manual diary system which has a limited scope to a digital collaboration tool which smartly includes all the present collaborative needs with minimum efforts in its maintenance and monitoring.

Employee Issues

All Employees might not be comfortable in use of IT tools. This system needs all employees to have certain level of familiarity with the use of computers at least for the purpose marking the attendance where system login and logoff is required. Moreover, managing various tasks, reporting on tasks and monitoring the status of others in flow are some complex activities at least for some employees. The employees may feel insecurity in terms of their job. Therefore, they may resist to change. Online attendance is another issue which may be the area of concern for some of the employees. There may be some other issues in the minds of employees and all that are needed to be addressed.

Issues at Employees Level
• Problems due to lack of IT Skills
• Complexity of system for few employees
• Marking of Attendance through Log-in
• Concerns for Security of Jobs
• Transparacy of tasks status
• Indivsdual issues

Exhibit 2: Some Important issues at Employees Level

Issues related to working Environment and at Organisational level

The manual working environment provides liberty for noting the events at a later time as it cannot be monitored immediately whereas the online system needs to be updated at real time so that task completion time can be minimized and informed to others in line for their further action if needed. People need to learn to coordinate with others in completion of their tasks. The adjustment in this environment may need some level of training and

enforcement of new practices. The challenge before the organisation is to maintain the level of output even during transition period. The transition period may be small or medium to long. It is expected that new change will increase the output level in future but present requirement of output has to be catered.

Training Needs Identification

The challenge is to identity the training needs before and during the transition period. This may not be only in terms of training for hard skills which is related to use of system and but also training requirements for the acceptance of new system and its related personal as well as organisational advantages. The better identification and planning of training tools the better will be the transition with minimum time.

PROCESS FOLLOWED FOR SMOOTH TRANSITION

The process for changing to new digital collaborative tools begins with the analyzing the collaborative and other digitization requirements of the organisation. The team of IT experts who are well aware of the existing manual diary system visits and gathers relevant information regarding problems of employees they face in using the physical diary and their requirements for the digital system. These information are collected from all levels of employees and systematically analyzed.

Process Followed for Smooth Transition	
(1)	Collecting, recording and analysing the requirements at levels of employees
(2)	Developing of Software & Testing
(3)	Customization of system
(4)	Installation of software in the server
(5)	Developing the databases by loading the data related to employees, departments, various work processes & their interrelations
(6)	Defiing the system authorisation & responsibilities for different levels of employees
(7)	Scheduling of Training Modules for different levels of employees
(8)	Implemetation of DIgital system at levels of organisation by stapping the mannual system
(9)	Evaluation of system performance

Exhibit 3: Process followed for smooth transisiton

Next process has been developing the software as per needs and customization with specific need of the organisation. Then the system was installed in server and relevant organisational data such as Employees database, Work process data, work flow etc. was loaded into digital database. The definition of user authorities created for the use of system at different levels of employees.

Now the system is ready to be put into operation. This necessitated for imparting system training to the users. Employees have been imparted with practical training of the digital system for the purpose of its uses as per authority and responsibilities. Then the manual diary system was stopped and all the employees were asked to use the new digital system. The change was introduced at full organisational level. The use of digital system was keenly monitored by the IT team and adequate help was provided to employees in need. The system was being evaluated for the fulfilment of its intended use and comfortability of employees.

MAJOR FINDINGS ON TRANSITIONS AT SPPL
The transition process from manual to digital has been a challenging one for the company with respect to acceptance of employees. The SPPL employees find it inconvenient due to mainly two reasons; firstly their attendance was linked to this system through log-in and log-off and secondly, the visibility of work completion status to all concern. Clear directions from the top level management made the employees to learn the new behaviour and the new system is now a reality as a major strength in the SPPL. Few important noticeable points are mentioned below:

- Already known system has been digitized: This means employees have already experienced the manual system and the same system has been digitized with additional facilities.
- Hesitation of employees due to attendance linked to digital system:
- Hesitation of employees due to transparency of work process status
- Development of Training Modules
- Clear Directions from the top management

- Success of Digital system in short period of time

CONCLUSION
The SPPL is a continuous learning organisation. It developed manual diary system to organize its work processes and successfully worked with this for almost ten years. When it found this inappropriate due to increased business complexity it progressed do develop digital collaborative system. This system not only included all the features of manual diary system but also includes new requirements along with the benefits of digital system. The training modules were developed according to needs of different level of employees and were adequately scheduled right before the implementation. The direction from top management has been clear and supportive at each step from requirement analysis through system development, development of training modules and implementation. Due to all this made the SPPL to successfully implement the digital collaboration system as a pioneer company in technology adoption.

BIBLIOGRAPHY
Grudin, J; Groupware and Social Dynamics: Eight Challenges for Developers, retrieved on 22 July 2014 from http://research.microsoft.com/en-us/um/people/jgrudin/past/papers/cacm94/ cacm94.html

Williams, J.P.;Groupware: Shared Thoughts, Shared Media, and Shared Models, retrieved on 19 July 2014 from https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~i385tkms/blog/archives/patrick/groupware paper.html