

Highlights of the STS Roundtable Webinar On Information Systems and Organization Design

Held on June 15, 2016

Participants:

1. Steven Alter
2. Mark Gover
3. Craig McGee
4. Bernard Mohr
5. Richard Ordowich
6. Tracy Peever
7. Sam Pless
8. Ron Smith
9. Rick Vanasse
10. Pierre Van Amelsvoort

Leader: Eli Berniker

Facilitators: Marcela Urteaga and Jean Fuller

Purpose of the Webinar:

Share ideas/reflections on the issues pertaining to the integration of information systems into organization design

Agenda

Prior to the webinar, participants received three discussion questions from Eli.

Process:

Participants were separated into three groups during which they discussed one or more of the three questions.

Since not all break out groups discussed one of the proposed discussion, the following are the highlights from the plenary session that followed:

- IS and Organization Design seem to be at odds with each other: IS seeks to standardize and Organization Design needs to include ways to continuously adapt to the needs of the organization's environment as well as members' need for initiative, autonomy and variety.
- Key terms do not have the same definitions. Examples:
 - System (software or process), organization, steering committee, participation, organization design (as a verb and as a noun),
- It seems that the work process needs to be defined (mapped) by all persons involved so as to show how work is actually done and so that IS can examine what it can and can not do.
- "Work arounds"/the informal ways of doing things need to be built in to IS. Algorithms need to be found to do this. Such algorithms would then facilitate knowledge creation.

- The use of the data generated by IS needs to be accessible so as to give members the opportunity to create information and knowledge.
- IS needs to be explicit as to its control function so that members of the organization are able to apply “minimum critical specs” – (i.e. there may be more than one best way)
- There is a strong need to alignment between the sponsors of IS and those for organization design. IS and Organization Designers can not be on separate agendas.
 - Steering committees and design teams need to be aligned in regards to their respective outputs

Questions for the San Francisco Design Team as well as other Roundtable Members

1. How do I design IT so that it is compatible with STS principles?
2. We need common definitions
3. How can IS be agile to make the work system agile? (most ERP's are now a liability in regards to the need to be agile.)
4. What's wrong with traditional IS design? (We both need to focus on the work that needs to be done.)
5. How can we stop blaming IS? Who needs the data? Who is to blame for what problem to be solved?
6. How can wikis help out in this debate? Linux seems to be a successful model to emulate.