IMPLEMENTING AND MANAGING SYSTEMS BALANCE CENTRIFUGES LIMITED

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INTRODUCTION

Balance Centrifuges Limited is a medium sized company that has been taken over by a Japanese based firm Tomo Plc. Before the takeover ,the company had been operating for a number of years producing centrifuges .

The take over implies that the company might not be doing very well and as mentioned in the case study one main factor might be that the company kept on holding on to the traditional methods and values which are not very competitive in today's cut throat market .

Any plans to improve the current management techniques have to take into consideration the fact that many of the staff have been working for the company for a long time and are not really keen on change .The final management report should also keep all the current staff "on board" concerning all issues concerning new management system and its implementation.

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MANAGEMENT REPORT

INITIATING AND MANAGING THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

Initiation and managing of the consultation process will can only be achieved if the goals and objectives of the parent company Tormo plc can be obtained. The first meeting will need to be with James Tao to gather information about what changes need to be made and what are the requirements of these changes. James has already suggested the main areas of concern regarding Balance Centrifuges limited and therefore it is imperative that further discussions are held with James to discuss theses areas in more detail. James would very likely be in favor of change to the existing system keeping in view the areas of concerns and ideas of how the new system should be implemented and managed will be discussed in the meeting .Another aspect of the meeting would emphasis on the man power resources that are available working within Balance Centrifuge Limited and the allocation of the appropriate tasks to appropriate people.

 After meeting with James I would then arrange a meeting with the managing director of Balance Centrifuges Mr Hudson. In the meeting with Hudson ,I would let him know about the proposed changes that James Tao have suggested and ask about his opinion upon the matters at hand. Assuming Hudson has been the managing director of the Balance Centrifuges for a long time, he will be in a better position to point out any tribulations or problems with the new proposed management system. The reason for meeting Hudson is because I have adopted a top down approach of interviewing personal of Balance Centrifuges Limited. Another reason for meeting Hudson is that he will be able to introduce me to the personal of Balance Centrifuges Limited and break the ice between me and the staff.

After meeting with Hudson I will then concentrate meeting with the production director and finance director on an individual basis so that I can gather their thoughts and reservations about the proposed changes. Their input will be vital as they both deal with they production process as well as the costing process respectively and changes to their existing way of doing things would not be very much appreciated.

I would then meet both ther directors together so that certain issues like who would supervise the smooth change over of new system can be discussed .

The next meeting is very crucial and will be held with Manesh Patel. Manesh is a very key person as he has been working with the company for over 20 years .Manesh as mentioned in the case study has the respect of the staff members of Balance Centrifuges Limited and if the proposed system is accepted by Manesh ,it will help the rest of the staff to accept new change in the management system that the staff might have reservations about. In this meeting issues like appropriate allocation of duties ,staff acceptance issues as well as any reservations that Manesh might have, would be discussed. Manesh would also be asked to be the liaison manager for the new project and discuss any issues relating to it.All the discussions in the meeting with Manesh should be made keeping in view that Manesh has worked in the company for a long time and will not be very keen on changing the way things are run by him for years.

After consulting with Manesh, I would then consult all eight project managers individually as well as together, to let them know about the proposed changes to the

system As well as ask them about the practicality of the new project and get first hand advise from the people who will be using the system. These project managers will be implementing the new system and therefore their thought and opinions are very important.

The next meeting will be with the production engineer .The meeting will include topics like the best way for processing job cards and how the new system can be improved to increase productivity and decrease the work load generated by manually generating the job cards .Other topics that will be discussed will be how to keep in touch with the progress of projects once they have been passed on to the progress chasers .

Lastly I would meet with the Process chasers in order to make sure that the new system takes in to consideration an automated system that can calculate the costs of the completed jobs as well as ways of generating alerts in case the work is not carried out to meet the dead lines.

Consultation is an on going process and these meeting with different personnel of Balance Centrifuges will be an on going process to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the change over to a new management system.

EXISTING PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The existing system of the firm is a manufacturing system .The impact of IT on manufacturing systems came in several waves. The first uses were in keeping track of inventory and work in process and performing recordkeeping about who did what work ,when they did it ,and how well they did it.

Despite progress in automating manufacturing systems ,Balance Centrifuge Limited is only partially automated because it is possible to get better results by automating some functions and leaving others to the flexibility, common sense and ingenuity of human workers.

The existing system emphasizes on people rather then overemphasizing on machines which helps develop a better relationship between the company and the staff. General Motors spent $40 billion on improving their management system but failed to reap rewards of this huge investment as most of their machines and robots were not needed and were never used.

The production of Gantt charts and job cards is very good as it sets out specific targets for specific people .People tend to work much efficiently if they are told what is to be expected of them and what work needs to be carried out by them.

Despite all the advantages of the current system ,it does have some major areas of concern .

There are eight project managers and all of them are supervised by one chief project manager. There seems to be no direct communication with the project managers and Manesh Patel. Even though it is generally known that an IT manager can manage up to seven people but it also needs greater need for responsibility and supervision especially in the most repetitive tasks.

The project staff produce paper based Gantt charts and job cards based on their calculations. Even with the immense experience of the project staff, human error is possible in the calculations and the production of the Gantt charts and job cards. The

project staff may have to spend most of their time producing these charts when they might be able to work on some thing else if these charts were generated with the help of a software system.

There seems to be very little communication between the project staff and the progress chasers .Lack of communication can lead to misunderstandings and confusion.

Inter departmental communication should be achieved with the help of the LAN networking system

The cost calculation process is processed with the help of spreadsheets but repetitive tasks should be generated with the help of an efficient software system .

PROCUREMENT PROCESS

Balance Centrifuges limited need effective and efficient software system that will be able to help them generate Gantt charts and report cards as well as help management to keep track of the projects.

Tomo plc have a policy of not using bespoke systems .Even though software can be combined in order to create the software system ,I believe that the Balance Centrifuge ltd will benefit the most if they get a tailor made software system designed by qualified bespoke package developer keeping in mind the staff requirements .This can be comparatively very expensive but it will be tailor made and will help the staff to perform their tasks efficiently. They can offer tender for the development of the software but specific requirement should be highlighted and legal requirements should be taken care of. The tenders will be quoted high and low and should be well negotiated in the interest of the company.

How ever some software packages could be combined together to develop the system but I feel that it will still leave a few tasks that would not be able to be done with the combined packages. The system developer will have to do extensive research as to what kind of software are available in the market and weather they meet the criteria wanted for the new software system.

Balance Centrifuge ltd should not develop the software themselves because they do not have the relevant experience and qualifications in software development and a self made software may not even work .

The company can also use larger generic applications to develop the software and this might be cheaper and effective as large generic software usually come with extensive support and help if some thing might go wrong.

Which ever method Balance Centrifuge ltd uses to produce the software system they should have the following in to consideration
- Need to know all the requirements needed from the new system
- Consider the cost element of the implementation and maintenance of the new system including staff training
- Risk evaluation of the proposed system and the advantages and disadvantages
- Checking and rechecking the details supplied from the suppliers or developers in order to come up with the best software solution
- Staff training on the new system and implementation of the system
- The maintenance of the system once implemented should also be discussed and addressed to in the negotiations between suppliers

- If possible, try to get demos of the proposed system and see the usability of the system
- The system should be user friendly and take in to consideration the requirements of the project staff as well as the management.

SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

Balance Centrifuges Ltd has been working with the existing system for a long time and therefore the new system will have a lot of reservations attached to it. The staff might be unsure as to how the new system would work.

Balance Centrifuge should consider two options as to the implementation of the methodology, a Waterfall prototype or a Rapid prototype.

Before considering which prototyping is best suitable for the company ,they should highlight the specific requirements or the basic needs of the staff of the company and its staff.

A quick prototype of the new system should be implemented which performs at least some of the main specific task in order to maintain user interest and confidence in the new system.

I think that rapid prototype model would be better than water prototype for Balance Centrifuge ltd.

The main reason to consider Rapid prototype is because once the new system has been implemented it can be viewed and can be changed accordingly. The system can be updated and changed according to the user and organization requirements when the software is being implemented and thereafter. How ever with water prototyping the system is implemented in stages and might reduce the confidence in the new system by the staff as it does not work until all the system is implemented . Another reason to consider the Rapid prototype is because of the quality standards to remove any defects are checked whilst the system is being implemented but with the waterfall prototype the quality standards are only checked once the system is fully complete.

A quality plan should be implemented in the beginning of the software life cycle clearly stating the significant attributes the new system should have .These quality plans should be implemented at each stage of the product life cycle. These attributes should be discussed between the software developer and the project manager (James Tao) and constantly debated and changed accordingly. James Tao should be regularly monitoring the development of the system and make sure that the quality plan attributes are maintained.

All the members of the project team should help James Tao to maintain the quality plan and make sure that the project is constantly monitored.

STAFF ADAPTATION

The initial reaction of staff members to any kind of change is always negative .Many people think that change will mean more work for them to do and suspicion that they might not be able to adopt to the new change .Staff at Balance Centrifuge ltd will also vbe vary of change as they have just been taken over by a new company and they might be insecure about their jobs .They also have been working with the existing system for a long time and will not be keen to accept any change to their existing method.