



RAINMAKERS

The SMOKE SIGNAL

PREMIERE ISSUE

From the Management Corner

The Rainmaker Story

American Indian traditions held the Rainmaker as a special and powerful figure. The Rainmaker could ensure food would be plentiful by "helping nature turn-on rainfall" when needed to assure their food would be available to sustain the tribe.

In today's business, the Rainmaker sustains business by ensuring the revenue streams and delivery processes operate effectively enough to generate wealth... and sustain the organization.

Since we are convinced this life is not a "dress rehearsal" we want to participate in a venture that can truly be a Win/Win/Win relationship. (Our clients, partners and selves prosper). This American Indian tradition seemed a wonderful analogy to describe our purpose and values. Therefore the name Rainmakers was selected. Taking care of your customers, and finding new ones are the underlining themes of our efforts.

How We Add Value

Rainmakers represents a portfolio of companies who provide the highest quality products and services in the marketplace. Our Consortium of Strategic Partners are selected based upon the concrete value, extensive expertise and practical business acumen they can deliver.

We specialize in working with mid-market businesses and organizations by utilizing methodologies developed from over 20 years of experience to assist organizations like yours get tangible results from their people, processes and technology. Our model is based upon the best practices of organizations that have successfully used technology and managed change.

Organizations who are successful have specific, measurable end-results in mind, and ensure a balance between the Tools/Technology they employ, the Process/Systems they implement, and gain Human Acceptance from those people needing to change their behavior.

As simple as this model sounds, the ramifications of employing it in your business planning and implementation projects has tremendous value. We always can apply this model to any relevant situation and better understand the risks, obstacles and probability of success of the venture. In fact, specific "to-do's" and action plans can be derived quickly that makes sense and leads many troubled situations back to a more successful track.

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Information Officer Forum

Which Comes First – The System or the Process?

Nearly 100 years ago, the great architect Frank Lloyd Wright laid one of the cornerstones for his new idea of "organic architecture." It was the concept that "form follows function." This phrase resolved, for many, the issue of whether architecture was a decorative art or an exercise in engineering, social or structural.

Today, those of us who select and implement software application systems, particularly enterprise-wide systems, are often confronted with a seemingly similar conundrum: Do you adapt a system to a firm's business processes or do you adapt a firm's business processes to the system?

To some this may appear to be a sense-

Do you adapt a system to a firm's business processes, or do you adapt a firm's business processes to the system?

less question. Obviously, you select a system that fits the business processes of the firm. And, when you find only a partial fit, you tailor or modify the software to the firm's requirements.

But many people feel that a firm can "learn" better processes from systems. This idea has received a boost in recent years from vendors who claim to have embedded best practice process models in their systems. Buy our system

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HR & Project Highlights

When Bad Projects Happen to Good Leaders.... Meeting the Challenges of "People-Intensive" Projects

Any executive will tell you that Project Managers are worth their weight in gold when they say that magic phrase, "On time, on task and under budget."

Project Managers can appear so confident and competent that it is easy to place them on a pedestal. Despite mastery and experience, bad projects can happen to good project managers.

A Different Vantage Point

It's vital to understand the needs and wants of a client's project managers. It helps to identify certain types of projects that tend to fail more frequently despite the involvement of highly skilled project managers.

While no two projects are identical in scope, budget and timeline, a common set of factors are present in these challenging initiatives that we call the "People-intensive Projects."

Major studies agree that the failure and under-performance rate of people-intensive projects is sobering. The most reliable data suggests that only 25-30% of these types of projects actually achieve intended results on schedule. People-intensive projects also tend to be financial nightmares with over 70% exceeding their budgets by a minimum of 30%.

People-Intensive Projects

People-Intensive projects are initiatives that require *extensive or extraordinary* time and efforts of participants to achieve their intended results. These time and efforts requirements are caused by three distinguishing factors.

The Participation Factor relates to the involvement of people essential to the project. The participation factor generally follows two patterns.

One common pattern is that small numbers of people are required to make significant efforts to achieve the project outcomes.

Another pattern is causes large numbers of people to collectively make relatively small efforts.

The Complexity Factor relates to logistical challenges that must be overcome to meet project goals. The complexity factor follows two general

variations on a theme.

One variation centers on logistics and scheduling complexities. Another variation focuses on people-based complexity. One project manager explained three unsuccessful attempts to introduce Sales Force Automation technologies in his company. As the project manager explained, "No one was ever on the same page. Sales Force Automation means different things to different executives."

The Change Factor relates

to personal and organizational impacts that must be accounted for in project implementation. This

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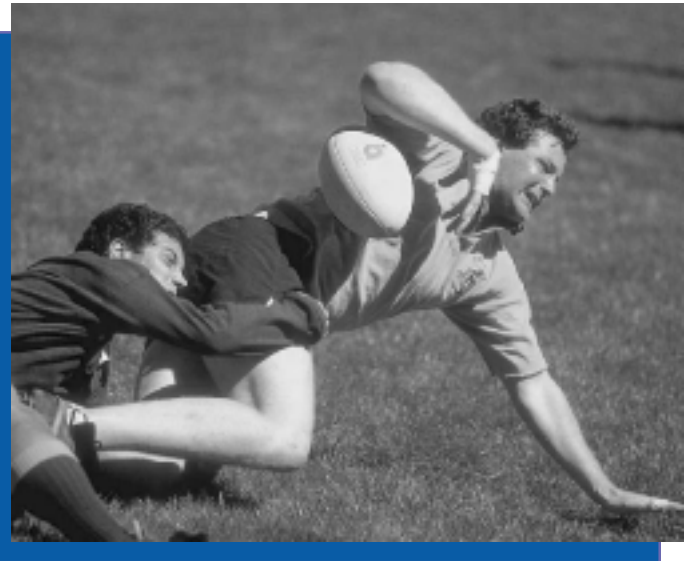
factor is visible in two forms.

One form is anticipated change resistance. Another form is unintended consequences of project. At a distribution company, drivers interpreted new technology as a signal that they were being monitored and would eventually lose their jobs.

Ingredients for People-Intensive Project Success

Do "people-intensive" projects pose an insurmountable problem for today's experienced project managers? Hardly. We've learned that a combination of knowledge and tools can help experienced project managers tackle the special challenges of people-intensive projects.

Education - One approach that we have found very successful for experienced project managers



is some "just in time" education. Our workshops are designed to help them with three important skills. First, we help them recognize the factors of projects at a practical level by looking at the kinds of projects they work on. Second, we help them recognize and anticipate trouble-spots are likely to occur in a people-intensive project. Third, we provide them a crash course in the special types of skilled resources that they might need to employ in their project..

Tools - Project Managers are adept at finding tools that help them manage their projects more effectively such as flow charting tools, project management tracking software and budget trackers. Above all, however, these tools they must be flexible enough to allow each Project Manager to incorporate them into their own working styles.

For Those Facing People-Intensive Projects

If your company anticipates what may become a people-intensive project, here are some steps you can take:

1. Evaluate your project carefully to determine whether your project meets the participation, complexity and change factors.
2. If you plan to use an internal Project Manager, don't immediately assume that their project experiences or backgrounds are appropriate.
3. If you plan to use an external advisor or consultant, be sure that your selection criteria includes proven experience in "people-intensive" projects.

The Rainmaker Story

Our clients recognize that competitive pressures and customer demands are forcing changes to their business where these attributes will be of value. Our clients are being challenged by these realities. They must:

- Be "easy to do business with" from their ideal clients' perspective.
- Use technology as a strategic competitive advantage to drive down costs, raise barriers of

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entry to their competitors and leverage their people and information.

- Learn to quickly adapt to changes in the marketplace by adapting processes, enabling technology and empowering people.
- Focus and enhance their core competencies while outsourcing peripheral services and functions as common sense and economics dictates.
- Have management teams become habitual about "planning the work - and working the plan."

Focusing your business on your core competencies and outsourcing peripheral functions has been a successful strategy of many businesses. One of our old adages of the past is "you can make an outstanding vendor/contractor into a mediocre employee simply by hiring them."

Jon Liberman is president and founder of Rainmakers. Prior to the formation of Rainmakers, Liberman led the Business and Technology Consulting Group/Sales and Marketing Team of Checkers, Simon & Rosner, LLP/Chicago. He has over 20 years of experience in advising small to medium sized businesses.

Meeting the Challenges of "People-Intensive Projects"

4. If you need to use a specific firm, but notice that they lack the people-intensive skills you require, don't hesitate to look elsewhere.

Left unaddressed, "people-intensive" projects can become difficult, costly and ultimately unsuccessful for the most savvy Project Manager. With

Which Comes First?

and we will show you how to better run your business, is the implicit offer.

We suggest the answer is simple: there really isn't a question here. In a way, both and neither are right. Just like the chicken and the egg.

In selecting an application system, you need to examine your critical business processes. At some level during evaluation and selection, you should be rethinking those processes, particularly with an eye to how technology can enable them to be more effective and efficient. Select a system that best fits how you envision doing business in the future.

When you move into implementation, you will find a combination of constraints and possibilities when you try to match the system to your vision of how things should work. You will abandon some directions and open up new ones.

The reality of what you will end up with is a combination of your firm's unique process requirements and the system's implied process and specific capabilities. If the project is a success, you will retain as much of the best of both worlds as is possible.

In 1953, near the end of his career, Frank Lloyd Wright railed against the abuse of his dictum. "Form follows function' has become spiritually insignificant: a stock phrase," he wrote. "Only when we say or write 'form and function are one' is the slogan significant."

It is the same with enterprise systems. System and process evolve into one. The challenge is to optimize both for the benefit of the business.

Bob Beard is managing director of the Chicago Consulting Group of American Express Tax & Business Services. The Chicago Consulting Group specializes in business and systems consulting services for mid-market manufacturing and distribution firms.

the right perspectives, knowledge and tools your firm can avoid a crisis on the critical path.

John M. Karnatz is president of Sina & Royce, Inc. The firm develops products and services for consulting and professional services firms based on expertise in organizational behavior and project management. His personal expertise focuses on assimilation, the human acceptance of information technology.

This is the premiere issue of THE SMOKE SIGNAL. It is our goal to provide information that is timely, informative and instructive. Help us meet our goal and your needs. By providing us with comments and suggestions we can tap into our expansive network of professionals and address your business and management questions. Let us know your toughest challenge, and we'll address it in a future issue.

Suggestion for Future Topic: _____

Your Current Challenge: _____

We can contact you directly with relevant information re: your challenge and appropriate workshops scheduled in your area:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Fax: _____

e-mail: _____

Can we add a colleague to our mailing list?

Name: _____

Title: _____

Company: _____

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Business Development Huddle

Opportunity Management, Performing the Impossible

It's a dilemma that's hitting American businesses of every size, in every industry. Staying competitive in this extremely fluctuating business environment. It seems as though to stay afloat, you need to perform the impossible. First, deliver superior customer service. Second, cut your costs of doing business. And third, increase revenues.

There is a way to address these complicated business challenges while staying afloat and expanding your business.

The secret? A simple, yet effective model called Opportunity Management which manages your Opportunities To Do Business (OTDB) and ties together all crucial elements of your sales and marketing efforts into one, integrated and communicating entity. It is a way for your sales staff to identify Ideal Clients, manage the "nurturing" of these contacts, increase the sales closing ratios and follow-through in effective customer service to expand the business.

Is your company a candidate for Opportunity Management? A quick assessment will tell you. . . first, look at the symptoms of Opportunity Mis-Management. If your company is experiencing some of these symptoms, then see if you fit the profile for change.

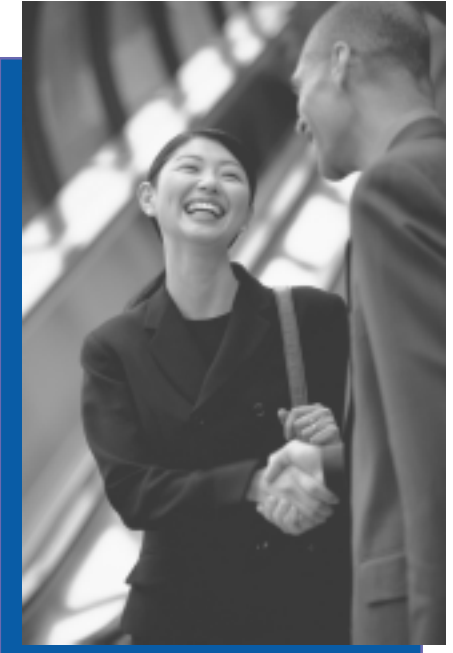
Symptoms of Opportunity Mis-Management

When looking at the symptoms of Opportunity Mis-Management, start with accessing your current management of sales leads and opportunities. Is there a process or system in place to get these leads into a Sales "Opportunity Pipeline" so they can be "worked" over a period of time? Do all of the departments involved in the sales process work together, communicating key information between them? Is your field staff "plugged into" headquarters?

If you're not sure about how you are managing your opportunities, here are some of the symptoms of Opportunity Mis-Management:

- An erosion of your market share—either steady over a period of time, or a fast, rapid decline
- Little ROI from sales improvement and technology investments
- The entrance of competitors into formerly exclusive territory
- Competitors forcing margin erosion
- Customers perceiving little difference among suppliers
- Customer service problems
- Employee morale problems

Ignoring any of these symptoms can lead to more serious business problems. Successful companies have discovered the need for real change



begins with management devising a carefully crafted plan to integrate technology and change. The paradigm of Opportunity Management steps management through developing and implementing real change to lead to real success.

In our next newsletter, we'll discuss the components for successful company change and how to predict and survive the "famine" in the sales cycle.

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"Opportunity Management, Performing the Impossible" is written by Jon Liberman, president of Rainmakers. You can obtain a full copy of this management paper by contacting Rainmakers at 847.251.3327 or via e-mail: jon@rainmks.com fax: 847.251.8412



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