Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between the data view of a system and the process view of a system? Why is this distinction important when designing a new system?
2. Discuss four reasons that a DFD is a stronger tool than a written narrative of the business processes.
3. How do companies use an RFP when sourcing software? What are the key items that should be included in the RFP?
4. If you were advising a firm on developing an RFP, what would be some key suggestions you would make for improving the effectiveness of the RFP?
5. When evaluating vendor offerings, what are the key factors that will help your firm determine the best software product to acquire?
6. Even if a system pays for itself financially, an organization must conduct a thorough feasibility study. What types of feasibility should be assessed, and what information does each type of feasibility assessment provide the organization?

Case Study: Vignette Continued[3]

Larson Property Management Company is one of the largest property management companies in California, with more than 1,000 employees. The company provides a full array of commercial management and development services. These activities include complete management services for commercial office and retail buildings and apartment complexes; construction, repair, and maintenance of commercial properties; and financial management and billing services for commercial real estate clients. The company has experienced significant expansion over the past five years in response to the growth in apartment and commercial construction in southern California, and this expansion has resulted in the need to hire a large number of employees on an ongoing basis to staff its operations.

Larson Property Management has depended on a legacy HRIS to manage its applicant and employee databases. The system runs on a client-server computer system. The system was implemented approximately 10 years ago, prior to the company's rapid growth and when it employed fewer than 100 employees. The system's functionality is limited to the storage and retrieval of employee and applicant data. For recruiting purposes, the system requires a clerk to manually enter basic applicant data, the results of the application test, and whether or not an offer of employment has been made. Prior to this, applicants' files were passed around to those who reviewed the materials and were sometimes misplaced, so trying to locate a particular applicant's file was often a problem. The current HRIS has limited file storage capability for applicant and employee records and currently has reached its storage capacity.

Larson Property Management has decided to replace its legacy HRIS. One application module in the new HRIS that the

company wants is a sophisticated applicant-tracking system (ATS). The primary objective of the ATS will be to provide a paperless hiring process. The basic functions of the new system will be managing the requisition and approval of job openings, storing resumes and job applications and retrieving through query functions the names of applicants who match job requirements, tracking a candidate's progress through the recruiting and selection process, and providing automated reporting functions. The company's managers also want an e-HR functionality that includes the Internet posting of job openings through the company's website and external job-posting services, application and resume submission through the Web and through kiosks at various office locations, staff ability to access and use the system remotely through a Web browser, and online resume- and application-scanning capabilities.

Part of the design phase is modeling the processes that will be used in the system for applicant tracking. For Larson Property Management, this modeling will allow the system analysts to design an efficient paperless hiring process.

Larson Property Management is well aware that the design stage of the SDLC is critical for the successful implementation of the new ATS. However, there is considerable confusion about how to proceed with this phase. The HR and IT professionals assigned to the ATS committee have been meeting to plan the new system. From their planning and needs analysis, it is clear that a new HRIS application is needed, can save considerable time, and can result in more accurate storage and retrieval of applicant data for cost-benefit and other management reports.

[3]Note that this is the case from the vignette, plus added material.

The company has had several vendors provide presentations, with each vendor outlining its particular approach to the design of an ATS. But these presentations were primarily focused on the physical design of the new ATS. The HR and IT committees must now begin the design process, which must be completed in three months.

Case Study Questions

1. Based on the material in this chapter, design a three-month operational plan for the ATS.
   a. In your plan, make certain you differentiate between the logical and physical design of the ATS. Which one should be done first? Which one is more important?
   b. Describe the importance of the data view versus the process view for the design of the new ATS.
   c. Who are the important stakeholders to be considered in the design of the ATS?
   d. How will you determine whether these stakeholders need the information that the new ATS will deliver?
   e. Based on your personal knowledge of recruiting by companies, develop a DFD with at least two levels.
2. Based on the work you have completed for Question 1, provide a brief outline of the RFP that is to be sent to the HRIS vendors.