

Problems

1. SYSTEMS PLANNING

Announcing a New Information System

The AJAX Company is considering implementing a new accounting system, which will automate sales processing, cash receipts, accounts payable, and cash disbursement procedures. Roger Moore, AJAX's CIO sent an announcement letter to the AJAX community. In the letter, Moore said: "I have contracted with Spartan Consulting Group to do the needs analysis, system selection, and design work. The programming and implementation will be performed in-house using existing IT department staff. The development process will be unobtrusive to user departments because Spartan knows what needs to be done. They will work independently, in the background, and will not disrupt departmental and internal audit work flow with time consuming interviews, surveys, and questionnaires. This promises to be an efficient process that will produce a system that will be appreciated by all users."

Required

- a. Draft a memo from George Jones, director of internal audits in response to Moore's letter.

2. PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Classify each of the following as a problem or a symptom. If it is a symptom, give two examples of a possible underlying problem. If it is a problem, give two examples of a possible symptom that may be detected.

- a. Declining profits
- b. Defective production process
- c. Low-quality raw materials
- d. Shortfall in cash balance
- e. Declining market share
- f. Shortage of employees in the accounts payable department
- g. Shortage of raw material due to a drought in the Midwest
- h. Inadequately trained workers
- i. Decreasing customer satisfaction

3. SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT AND USER INVOLVEMENT

Kruger Designs hired a consulting firm three months ago to redesign the information system that the architects use. The architects will be able to use state-of-the-art computer-aided design (CAD) programs to help in designing the products. Further, they will be

able to store these designs on a network server from which they and other architects may be able to call them back for future designs with similar components. The consulting firm has been instructed to develop the system without disrupting the architects. In fact, top management believes that the best route is to develop the system and then to introduce it to the architects during a training session. Management does not want the architects to spend precious billable hours guessing about the new system or putting work off until the new system is working. Thus, the consultants are operating in a back room under a shroud of secrecy.

Required

- a. Do you think that management is taking the best course of action for the announcement of the new system? Why?
- b. Do you approve of the development process? Why?

4. SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

Consider the following dialogue between a systems professional, Joe Pugh, and a manager of a department targeted for a new information system, Lars Meyer:

Pugh: The way to go about the analysis is to first examine the old system, such as reviewing key documents and observing the workers performing their tasks. Then we can determine which aspects are working well and which should be preserved.

Meyer: We have been through these types of projects before, and what always ends up happening is that we do not get the new system we are promised; we get a modified version of the old system.

Pugh: Well, I can assure you that will not happen this time. We just want a thorough understanding of what is working well and what is not.

Meyer: I would feel much more comfortable if we first started with a list of our requirements. We should spend some time up front determining exactly what we want the system to do for my department. Then, you systems people can come in and determine what portions to salvage if you wish. Just don't constrain us to the old system!

Required

- a. Obviously these two workers have different views on how the systems analysis phase should be conducted. Comment on whose position you sympathize with the most.
- b. What method would you propose they take? Why?