Enterprise Management

Understanding

The Fundamental Situation

&

The Right Solution for You!

"It's Your Business to Manage!"

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The Situation:

Your company is continuing to expand and therefore growth and change are part of everyday life. The company has an information systems component revolving around a specific information technology platform. You sense your company is becoming increasingly dependent on your information systems and here too there is a constant awareness and demand to maintain a competitive edge and change is constant. Your corporate Information System's challenge today is managing ever-increasing change while delivery impeccable service to the business and all customers.

The scope, complexity and risk involved in information technology change have taken on a new look. The transition from mainframe to distributed computing is mostly behind us. The year 2000 issues are also a thing of the past. Application reengineering has taken its place as one of the larger motivators of change. The buzzwords of 'e-commerce & e-business' drive new business opportunity and of course new application requirements. Massive project groups are busy with the architecture, design, testing and implementation of these new applications. The cost is staggering and the obvious fact remains there is no return on investment until your business and your business partners mutually accept and utilize the new functionality provided by the applications.

Meanwhile your existing Information Systems Operations is still trying to maintain the 'business as usual' and still cope with all the change to their world. The combination of these activities adds huge ***complexity*** to the existing infrastructure and ***risk*** to business delivery.

The real business transition depends on ***'operational readiness'***.

Let us compare these information systems activities to a railroad. The content of each boxcar is unique. Application design, development and test are contained in one boxcar, while implementation and user acceptance testing is in another one. A third type of special boxcar contains the production environment. It is closely monitored and managed to ensure the contents are safe.

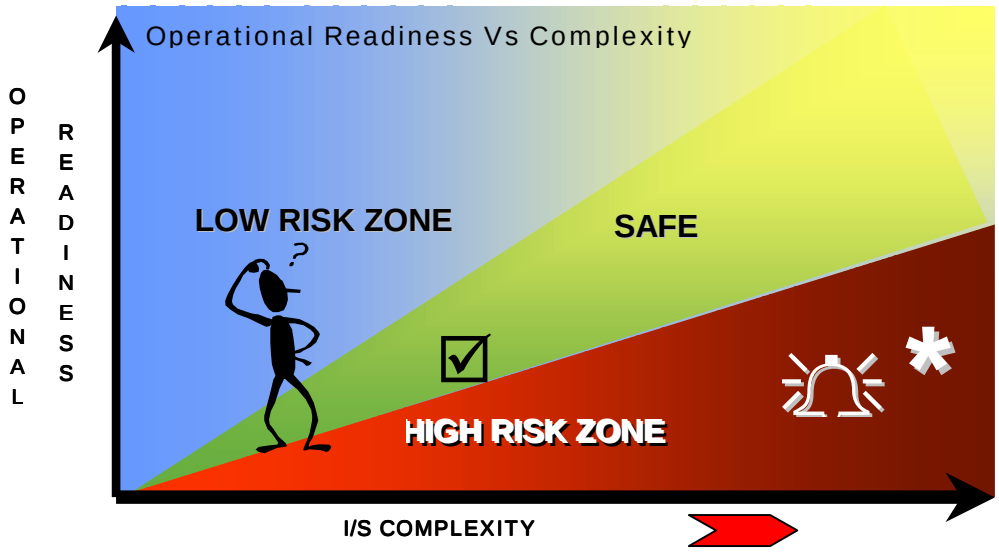
The business value to the railroad company is the safe delivery of all the boxcars and the contents of each and every one. The value to the client or user community of each boxcar is the ability to use the contents to perform that specific part of the business.

The entire scenario depends on the operational readiness of every component that makes up the delivery mechanism or infrastructure. The tracks, railway bed, engines, fuel depots, the stations, boxcars and people are all business critical components. The tracking information and the processes that make it all work in harmony are all essential infrastructure components and each must be operationally ready to perform no matter what the load is inside the boxcars.

Comparing the railroad model to your business, it may be of significant value to assess your information systems infrastructure readiness to meet the demands that are being placed on it.

- Does your present system meet the business availability demands? 7 X 24 X 365
- Does your present system deliver adequate transactional response times? < 2 seconds
- Are the changes being implemented without any production impact?
- Are all backup & recovery services regularly tested? Is recovery just data or is it more?
- What would be the hourly financial risk to your business if the information systems ceased to function? How long could your business survive? Do you know for sure?
- What image of production readiness do you portray to your internal & external clients?
- Are you ready to compare your ability to provide services compared to the competition?
- Do you readily have the above information to manage your operational readiness?

Many application implementations ignore or forget about these components until it is too late. The large IT assessment companies have pointed to ***poor operational readiness as being the largest cause of application development project failure.***



The name '**Strategic Operational Solutions Ltd**.' was chosen to reflect our specialty. We fully understand the problems and issues facing the business transition and we are positioned to offer our services from **project management** to **assessment** and **design** of the appropriate operational solutions to meet your needs.

The Solution:

Everyone understands I/S complexity and how it has mushroomed over the past few years. However, many people do not fully understand operational readiness and what is involved in creating the strategic solution.

From a purely technical point of view, this will mean implementing or developing monitoring tools to look at the servers, desktops and network components. There is no business value to a million dollars spent on hardware and software with the information residing in the hands of a group of 'techys' and not being applied at an enterprise level.

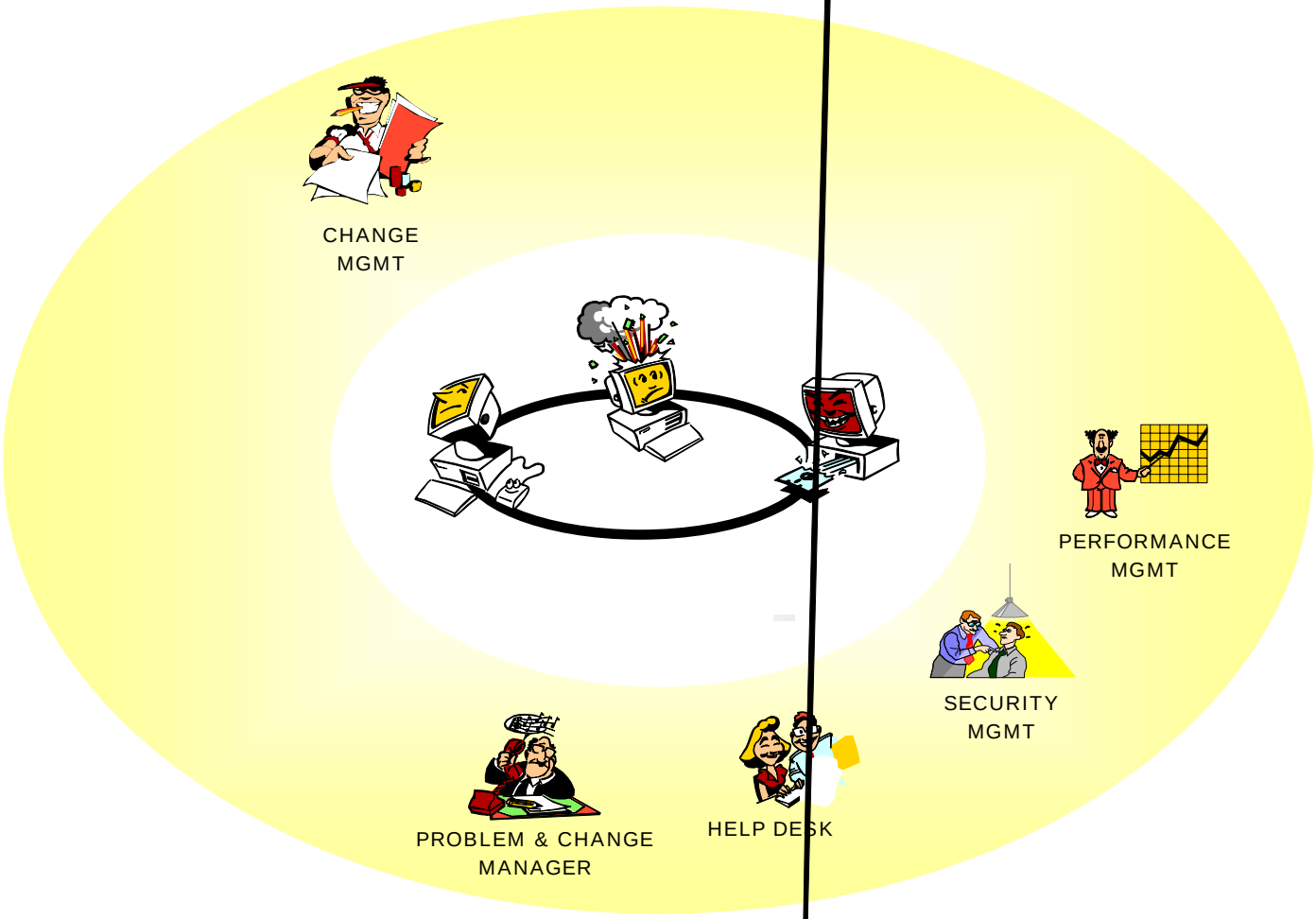
The applications people may view operational readiness as the ability to locally monitor the application, accept client calls and pass them back to the development team. This approach is a totally reactive solution working in a proactive environment.

The client or 'end user' will perceive operational readiness as the ability to deliver the business applications where they want them, when they want them with instant response time while still being able to make changes demanded by them. "*Perception versus value!*"

Business management will probably view operational readiness similar to the client, but with a view towards delivery costs verses business value.

In fact operational readiness involves portions of all of the above woven into a seamless mesh that covers every facet of application transition, application delivery, application maintenance and the delivery of continued value measured or perceived by the client.

There are four facets to consider, 1) organization, 2) process, 3) information and 4) tools requirements within each of the enterprise management disciplines. There are many disciplines that make up a full-scale information technology process model. The design and implementation of an integrated enterprise-wide model carefully chooses the required disciplines ensuring individual operational readiness that is correct for the given operational complexity.



Real Scenarios & Actual Solutions

It is advantageous to start any solution with an end-to-end assessment of the existing enterprise. This allows the customer to step back and look at a broad perspective of what is working and what is not. The assessment also renews the attention to full enterprise systems management and creates a cultural awareness and enthusiasm to address the issues. With a freshly engrained vision and a new set of goals, the new prioritized focus is attacks the issues one at a time.

The following two paragraphs represent a typical example of a requirement for general Information Technology operational improvement and how the assessment addressed the requirement and lead to the solution.

Operational Assessments and Availability Management

A telecommunications company needed to assess their present state of systems management and operational readiness. The company was experiencing incredible growth and the type of industry they were in demanded very high availability. They realized the need for a cultural shift from technical fix or break-based answers to business process based enterprise-wide solutions. Their client must be satisfied.

Mr. Baird and another consultant performed an assessment of 41 processes based on IBM's Information Technology Process Model (ITPM) methodology. The client was soon aware of their strengths and weaknesses allowing them to put special emphasis on specific areas. They also had a clear direction of what was possible in enterprise management and automation. The cultural shift to process awareness and risk management was evident by the sharp decline in the number of problems and an increase in the number of successful changes. Bob was brought back to perform other consulting engagements resulting in increased availability and general performance.

The following examples are customer scenarios and the solutions that were developed to address the issues.

Asset, Configuration & Inventory Management:

A large petroleum company had integrated with another large company and there was a need to understand where all the I/T assets were located in North America. Secondly, the knowledge base must contain all of the hardware and software configurations plus the network connectivity data. This information was necessary for corporate business planning, Y2K planning and compliance, future automated software distribution and many other processes. The plan was to perform a wall-to-wall inventory. However, it is expensive and would be out of date prior to completion.

Bob formed a team to design and implement a fully functional asset management system that automatically acquired the data and kept it accurate every twenty-four hours. The information was secure, yet available to users via web-based technology anywhere within their North American network. The entire project was completed in less than eight weeks and under budget and was immediately used.

Problem & Change Management:

An insurance company required a problem and change management system to meet their needs as they transitioned mission critical applications from a mainframe centric world to a network centric environment. They required real time data to proactively deal with problems as they happen. The request was to automate problem management where possible and quality Improve the rest until most problems were automated or eliminated. Change management had to be proactive, fully controlled, yet consists of a process driven solution that minimized the time from 'request to implementation'.

The solution was customized to meet not only their distributed environment, but also their mainframe world. The traditional change management meetings were automated and the lead times to implement were brought from two weeks down to an average of eight hours. The problem management process included prioritization of problems, automated recovery and automated tracking of problems from cradle to grave. Problem management was integrated with Change management to ensure knowledge of which changes fixed or could have caused specific problems. It was also integrated with the asset management system and the help desk to ensure end-to-end control. The customer and the users of the system saw immediate benefits.

Security Management:

A company required a renewed focus on security management for their growing distributed system. The requirements included policies, processes and procedures to address the information technology infrastructure and the people using it.

Bob worked with the security people and the CIO to develop a set of policies and procedures to deal with the situations. As part of the mandate he also suggested process automation to ensure the proactive discovery of security alerts. He also presented the solution to a major portion of the company. The immediate results were a cultural shift to security consciousness and closure of many of the loopholes that existed.

There are many more examples to choose from. However, the solution are always based on processes and backed by technology. This approach ensures continuity as technology changes and survival as companies continue to grow and merge.