

INFORMATIN MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FOR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

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Abstract

The need to manage growing amounts of information is critical. In today's economic climate, becoming more dynamic, the information and intellectual capital represent the key to generate new profitable opportunities. It has been shown that in most cases eighty percent of the essence of business is unstructured - files with various information, files, messages, reports, proposals and requests for proposals, created in different formats and stored in many places. On the other hand the management of the organizations needs timely information about the internal environment and external environment in order to carry out an optimal decision process. This flood of information required to be put in context - to be filtered, organized and made available to those who need a form as expressive as possible. It is only then that the levels of decision realize the full value of true information accumulated within the organization.

Making government more effective and efficient is a national issue. But getting it to work better and cost less will be impossible if national agencies cannot learn to manage with modern practices the information age demands. Today's information systems offer the government unprecedented opportunities to provide higher quality services tailored to the public's changing needs, delivered more effectively, faster, and at lower cost. Moreover, they can

enhance the quality and accessibility of important knowledge and information, both for the public and for national managers.

Strategic information management (i.e., managing information and information technology to maximize improvements in mission performance) will also be a crucial initiative for all national agencies as they move to implement the Government Performance and Results Act, which is focused on results-oriented management. With it, improved management information and restructured work processes can gradually reduce costs and increase service levels[4].

Without it, many agencies will find their efforts to move to results-oriented management hindered by their inability to develop vital data and useful information systems that support performance measurement and substantive mission improvements.

Fundamental Practices

Strategic information management is one critical, integrated part of any general management framework. Similar to the way modern organizations have gradually become dependent on information technologies, it has become an indispensable lens through which to view most vital general management decisions. Strategic information management typically involves defining a mission based on customer segments and needs; establishing core processes that accomplish the mission; understanding the key decisions that guide mission delivery processes; supporting those decisions with the right information available to the right people at the right time; and using technology to collect, process, and disseminate information in ways that improve the delivery of products, goods, and services to customers.

An information strategy describes the overall direction and general framework in which the organization's information resources and processes should be managed so that the organization would achieve its most important goals. An Information Strategy typically consists of the following:

IM goals and objectives that are well aligned with the organization’s mission and vision IM principles that articulate desirable outcomes and form the foundation for developing information policies one or more areas of strategic focus: this could be some critical information content; common information to be shared; some information-intensive process; or new information-based products or services.

Information management (IM) is the harnessing of the information resources and information capabilities of the organization in order to add and create value both for itself and for its clients or customers. Information management is the management of organizational processes and systems that acquire, create, organize, distribute, and use information. Information management includes all activities involved in the identification, collection, filtering, fusing, processing, focusing, dissemination, and usage of information.

Information management is a continuous cycle of five closely related activities:

- 1. identification of information needs;
- 2. acquisition and creation of information;
- 3. organization and storage of information;
- 4. information dissemination;
- 5. information use;

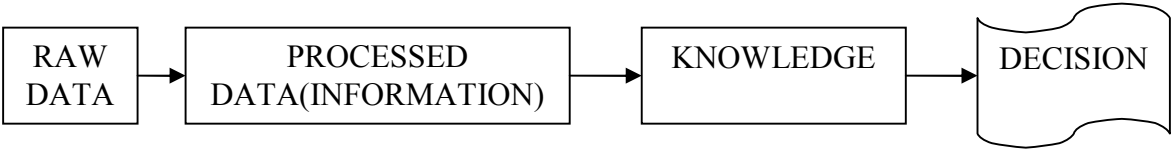


Fig. 1 Information flow[6]

The idea underlying IM is that just as an organization purposefully and systematically manages its human resources or financial assets, it should do likewise for its information resources and processes. All the classic functions of managing an organizational activity apply to IM as well:

- a) defining goals,

- b) providing leadership;
- c) developing policies;
- d) allocating resources;
- e) training staff;
- f) evaluation and feedback.

The term information generically refers to all facts, data, or instructions in any medium or form.

The manager requires quality information to understand situations and events and to quickly control the challenges that confront him. Quality information adds value to the decision-making process and is critical to the success or failure of an operation. Therefore, the manager must determine his information requirements and ensure that information is managed effectively.

Information management addresses information as a commodity instead of a technology and is performed at all levels, regardless of the extent of automation. Effective information management delivers critically important information in a timely manner to those who need it in a form that they can quickly understand.

Benefits of information management

Generally speaking, there are a lot of benefits from managing information strategically:

1. reduce costs;
2. reduce uncertainty or risks;
3. add value to existing products or services;
4. create new value through new information-based products or services.;
5. increased visibility into organization-wide business operations;
6. increased business processes efficiency and effectiveness;
7. accelerated responsiveness to business change;
8. reductions in business errors;

9. strategic management of information across internal and external organizations;
10. increased regulatory compliance.

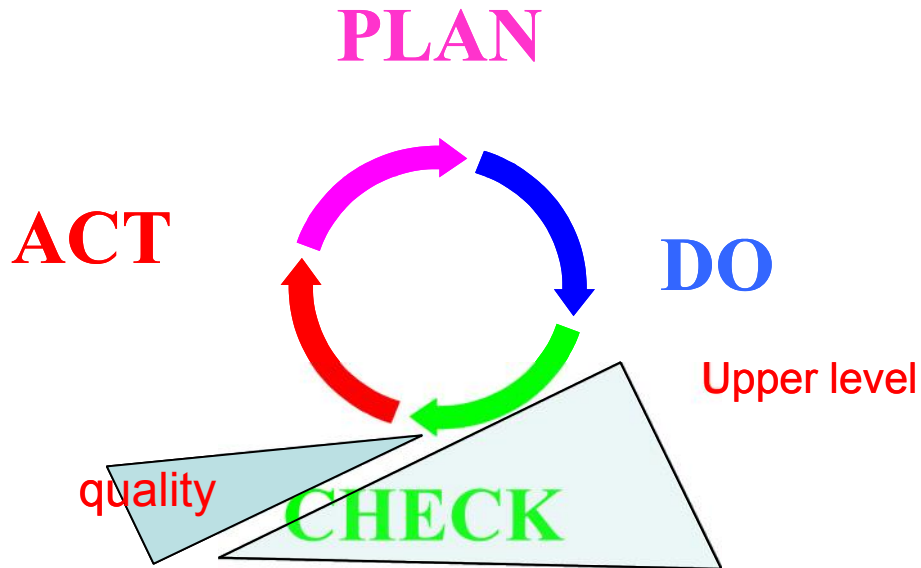


Fig. 2 TQM cycle

In my opinion, the key for a success is to apply the information management in all steps which are made in strategic management process, under the umbrella that are provided by Total Quality Management (TQM).

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