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Panel

Curriculum Integration Using the ERP Concept: A Tutorial and Discussion

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ABSTRACT

We have developed a detailed case of a fictitious manufacturing company and implemented it in an ERP system, SAP's R/3. Through this case and its ERP implementation, we are able to: (1) integrate business curricula, (2) demonstrate to students the integrated nature of business processes, and (3) provide students with the opportunity to work with complex business concepts. The case provides a common framework for assignments and exercises across multiple courses, and can either be used alone or in conjunction with SAP. The focus here will be on the role of the Introduction to MIS course that serves as the critical first step in the integration process. In addition some time will be spent discussing the costs and practical considerations of implementing ERP into a business curriculum.

Keywords

ERP, Curriculum Integration, Business Processes, Tutorial, SAP

INTRODUCTION

The case and the overall framework for curriculum integration will be briefly presented and the potential classroom uses in different disciplines (Accounting, Production, Marketing, HR, MIS, etc.) will be discussed with the participants. This will be followed by a discussion of the role of the introduction to MIS course as the foundation of our integration efforts. Exercises related to key business processes (e.g., procurement and fulfillment), will be demonstrated and the role of data and information in these processes will be discussed. Interested participants will be provided with accounts on the GVSU SAP servers to permit experimentation with the exercises after the conference is completed.

Finally, some time will be spent discussing the practical considerations of adopting ERP into the business curriculum. We will discuss integration with and without the use of an ERP, why SAP was chosen as our ERP system, early pitfalls and critical success factors in our implementation efforts, how we encourage and motivate faculty participation and, how faculty are brought up to speed in SAP. As well, this discussion will include an outline of hardware, software and technical administration costs.

OUTLINE

The following outlines our approach to this presentation:

- Overview of the framework for curriculum integration.
- Discussion of the role of the Introduction to MIS course as a foundation to the integration process
- Discussion of key business processes and the accompanying document flows, data flows and information flows.
- Descriptions of the cases and key case extensions and exercises.
- Integration examples using SAP
- Integration examples without the use of SAP
- Demonstration and discussion of exercises using SAP
- Hands-on experience with selected exercises using SAP
- Practical considerations, costs, issues, obstacles, critical success factors, etc.

BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS

This tutorial will illustrate a viable, tested approach to curriculum integration that includes courses that use SAP and those where the use of SAP is not feasible. Participants will gain an understanding of the key issues and critical success factors based on over five years of experience at GVSU (Cannon, Klein, Koste, and Magal, 2004). They will leave with samples of well-tested teaching material and access to a server where they can further experiment with the teaching material.

REFERENCES

1. Cannon, D. M., Klein, H. A., Koste, L. L. and Magal, S. R. (2004) Curriculum integration using enterprise resource planning: An integrative case approach, *Journal of Education for Business*, 80, 2, 93-102.