

Summary of Meeting
CAUSE Constituent Group on Decision Support
CAUSE97
December 3, 1997

The CAUSE '97 Decision Support Constituent Group meeting was attended by seventeen people. The group was representative of decision support experience/expertise and comprised departmental and institutional planners/users with decision support model and systems needs, as well as, designers, developers, and builders of decision support models and systems. It was also clear that overlapping roles and expertise existed for many of the people in the room. During the discussions that followed, some examples of current issues of industry and organization periodicals and a couple of the most recent books (on data warehousing) were continually circulating among the group. There were a number of comments on how helpful this was for people to get a line on some exceptional (many were free) subscriptions and resources to this type of information and knowledge.

Because of the broadly defined nature of decision support and the myriad of components, methodologies, architectures, and expertise, tools, and technologies, the discussion touched on a number of areas:

SECURITY!!...ACCESS to data!!...the right to know versus the need to NOT know? WHERE, WHEN, HOW (WHY?) do you implement it???

DATA WAREHOUSING!!! (no surprise here as data warehousing of some variety is unquestionably the most important part of DS models--note:Not necessarily the "functions" of DS.). Nobody asks what is it anymore.....the question is HOW DO WE DO IT?? When, where, and WHAT???. If somebody is still asking Why?....they might want to change their field :->)

Within data warehousing....DATA ARCHITECTURE!! (over heard: Build it and they MIGHT COME?!) If you can get it right here, you're certainly on a fast-track to better DS systems. Miss it and....well, lets just say you don't want to go there.

Data modeling; how valuable is it? who does it?

POLITICS!! The albatross of everybody in the room it seemed. How and who do you need to convince. Who pays for all this? Who owns the data? (see SECURITY above!).

Discussion was open, lively, user-friendly, and of global content, and resulted in all kinds of questions, comments, suggestions, asides, and anecdotes. Time of course was the bad-guy here. But before we headed out, the subject of how we could best support each other and further the CAUSE support of Decision Support as a conference subject area was suggested:

The new DS-List is the most effect way to easily reach each other so the need to SIGNUP to the list was emphasized. Also, encourage staff and colleagues to sign-up and to:

- Post ideas, solutions AND POTHOLES!!

- Ask questions (There ARE NO STUPID QUESTIONS)

- Respond to colleagues AND THE LIST (when appropriate...which should be often)

- Share what you find (don't assume anybody knows what you have

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just learned- most people don't and wish they did). Trials, tribulations,
testimonials!; Websites; Tools; Secrets of the trade.

If you or your University has a DS Website.....post it and
request it be added to the CAUSE website--contact Karen McBride in the CAUSE
office at kmcbride@cause.org.

Meeting was adjourned at 6pm.