

The EDUCAUSE ASM constituent group convened on October 19. There were about 35 attendees. Several topics were discussed:

Problem: system ownership - some users are afraid to take ownership of a system, and are resisting change, resulting in IT owning the system by default.

Suggestions: IT needs to state that IT can facilitate, but not make system selections. To get the right people at meetings, name an IT liaison in functional departments - they can determine which issues are functional, and which IT. Do Business Process Analysis after system selection; the functional office becomes the owner of each practice. Define all IT projects as really a business project and go through all those typical steps (upper-level support, business sponsor, etc.). Create priority committee including ERP and non-ERP projects. Do we need to hire highly skilled tech people in functional departments? Get involvement from functional people early, and continue after implementation. Define owner of business process to be non-IT. Empowerment is required for involvement, ownership, and participation. The to-not-do list must be agreed to, maintained and enforced (analysts cannot do jobs-on-the-side for departments).

Support after hours - few provide 24 X 7, except ensuring servers and applications are running. Is system availability guaranteed 24 X 7? Can we run nightly updates and not bring down the system? Although you can run nightly updates with the system up, some vendors recommend bringing down anyway. What does upper management consider on price versus availability?

Price negotiations - group with other schools for better prices (maintenance, consulting, & software price). Gartner has good resources here. A contract negotiator can help. It can be a good idea to have no pre-paid consulting hours. Contracts need to be reviewed carefully - get an expert (legal counsel, other schools).

Shop for consultants. Do you get charged for managing consultants who are never on-site? Be careful of travel expenses - perhaps require them to conform to client's policy. An occasional thank-you to consultants can be very good for relations and productivity.

ERP versus Best of Breed. Ownership required for Best of Breed; easier to do minor add-ons not available through ERP.

In order of implementation, Students should come before Alumni implementation because of matching problems.

A plug for next year's EDUCAUSE conference: submit proposals for administrative track sessions. Some people are unhappy that there are fewer administrative sessions than in previous years. The best way to turn that around is to submit proposals.

Kevin