Nova Southeastern University

H. Wayne Huizenga College

of Business & Entrepreneurship

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| Assignment for Course: | (Course number and title) |
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| Submitted by: | (Student’s name) |
|  | (Student’s ID number) |
|  | (Address) |
|  | (Work phone number) |
|  | (Home phone number) |
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CERTIFICATION OF AUTHORSHIP: I certify that I am the author of this paper and that any assistance I received in its preparation is fully acknowledge and disclosed in the paper. I have also cited any sources from which I used data, ideas of words, whether quoted directly or paraphrased. I also certify that this paper was prepared by me specifically for this course.

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Instructor’s Grade on Assignment:

Instructor’s Comments:

Human resource information systems (HRIS) have many benefits for the company involved including “decreased costs, improved communication and also a decreased time to accomplish HR related activities” (Ferdous, Chowdhury and Bhuiyan, 2015). Conversely, in a survey about the challenges in administering HRIS that was conducted by the Institute of Management and Administration, results “found lack of staff, lack of budget, problems with time management; need to work with other departments and lack of information technology support” as the main problems associated with relying on these systems (Ferdous, Chowdhury and Bhuiyan, 2015). With so many companies owning branches that are based all over the globe, global integration of HRIS is the logical next step in the process of building a more seamless system. In this case study, the process of global integration of an HRIS system is put up for evaluation.

According to the article, *The Top 5 HRIS Mistakes and How to Avoid Them*, the following are the top three pitfalls to avoid: “failure to effectively manage the change, failure to define, validate, and support data quality and failure to properly plan” (Fairchild, n.d.). There were many different obstacles that presented themselves within the case study completion of this HRIS integration, not limited to and including the aforementioned top three pitfalls. The main problems that arose were based around the leadership chosen on the London team, decisions made by that management team, the lack of communication, and the travel time it took for the completion of the project.

The first question that arose while reading was, if the integration of the HRIS system was from London to the U.S. and majority of the employees are based in the U.S.; why was London allowed to take the lead on this project? According to the case study, it was not economical to salvage any of the London based systems in place and their system was to be built new anyway so, the project should have been led by the Americans; who’s system was to be mirrored in the first place. Also, the manager on the American side had experience with these types of projects; while, the entire London team had no prior experience with any of these types of projects.

Finding a way to work together as a team proved difficult. “Single location projects draw on large reservoirs of shared tacit knowledge and trust, and when issues arise, senior management is on hand to make decisions and provide direction and support” (Wilson and Doz, 2012). When integration takes place, it would seem that some type of team building should be put into place before the project begins. “To be effective, dispersed teams have to develop a new set of collaboration competencies and establish a collaborative mind-set. This can be done by running small, dispersed projects involving just two or three sites before a project launch” (Wilson and Doz, 2012).

The communication problems stem directly from the leadership complications associated with this case study. The American lead was considered a “consultant” and his suggestions about reporting, payroll and interfaces were not addressed as important and later proved to be three separate issues that should have been dealt with individually; which put the project behind by having to address these after the fact instead of in the planning phases. Also, meetings were scheduled when the least amount of opposition would occur so, that what the London managers wanted would be voted in automatically. This also proved to cause additional setbacks because the oppositions proved to be critical information and caused more problems that should have been addressed in the first place and not ignored by management. Essentially the London team proved by their actions and decisions that they felt they knew the process better and yet, at every turn had to retrace their steps and go back to address the information or objections that were raised by the American manager in the first place.

The final major problem dealt with the physical locations of the teams. There was a communication delay for twenty-four hours when trying to ask questions from London to the U.S. because of the time difference. This could have been solved with the addition of a support team that worked through the night on this specific project. Also, the Americans ended up spending their off time working on parts of the project. Finally, when the London group had to come to the U.S. during the testing phase, it lasted longer than anticipated and added more time to the project completion.

Aside from these major problems, there were some minor ones that also surfaced during this integration project. These minor problems were as follows: computer coding and language differences, encryption software problems and outsourcing issues. Many of these issues could have been addressed in the planning stages of this project; especially, the language differences and the coding differences between American and European computer coding. Also, meetings with and including in the actual project a representative from the company(ies) that are doing outsourcing should have been an integral part of a seamless integration. “Projects should include generous travel budgets (for these outsourcing representatives) for face-to-face site visits, team meetings, and temporary transfers for key team members” (Wilson and Doz, 2012).

In single location changes all the employees “share the same language, culture, and norms, enabling flexibility and iterative learning as the project unfolds” (Wilson and Doz, 2012). These cultural understandings make it easier for cohesiveness. In a global integration, different cultures and norms can cause problems. In this case study, this was evident in the difference in language used for the same meaning within the HRIS system. Another example was how changes in employee’s addresses or insurance was handled by the programs in place for each individual country. Also, there was the difference in laws and the legality of some decisions based upon the different culture.

The initial hierarchy of how the company set up different branches was also a factor. In the American branch of the company everything was reported to IT with a backup reporting to HR, if necessary. In the London based branch everything ran directly through HR and not IT at all. This hierarchy initially sets up different branches in charge of the same things in different locations. If the key players in these organizations are not asked for input in this project then, some important issues will not be known and addressed and the wrong department could potentially be speaking for another without really knowing what is going on. Continuity of reporting should happen within the same organization.

Clearly this integration project case study lacked sufficiently experienced leadership and did not have the correct checks and balances in place to complete the task on time. “When the knowledge base underlying a project is fragmented and project teams are scattered over multiple locations, miscommunication, conflict, and stalemates over crucial decision making are much more likely” (Wilson and Doz, 2012). Having a senior manager(s) in place to handle decisions and look objectively can be helpful. Also a strong management team needs to be in place across all locations so that daily tasks can be completed on time. These teams need to be rigorous in their work ethic and specific in their shared goals (Wilson and Doz, 2012).

In the planning stages of this process, time needs to be spent addressing the goals of the project and a time table needs to be set up with all the goals broken down into small chunks with specific due dates to help facilitate completion on time. Because of distance and the sheer number of people working on this project,

…everything must be defined up front: the product or service architecture, the functionality of individual modules, and the interdependencies and interfaces between modules. In addition, process flows, timelines, and knowledge requirements need to be thoroughly understood so that everyone working on the project has the same understanding of the goals and their individual contributions to them. (Wilson and Doz, 2012).

Having an actual time table that everyone involved has seen and is aware of is paramount.

According to the article, *International Assignments: Who's Going Where and Why?,* definitely points to two main motivating factors for employees that include career development and advancement. Qualifying Criteria that companies/organizations are looking for include: leadership potential (80 percent), technical skills (75 percent), and criterion based decisions according to the assignment abroad. Other specifications that managers seek are individuals that are flexible and can easily adapt to new cultures, circumstances, and people. In addition, behavior traits and the desire for career advancement were a close second and third for consideration (Maurer, 2013). “When considering someone for an international assignment, 68 percent of respondents said family status was not considered, while 25 percent said family criteria depended on the project” (Maurer, 2013).

## According to the article, *10 Rules for Managing Global Innovation,* start small, provide a stable organizational context, assign oversight and support responsibility to a senior manager, use rigorous project management and seasoned project leaders, appoint a lead site, invest time defining the innovation, allocate resources on the basis of capability, not availability, build enough knowledge overlap for collaboration, limit the number of subcontractors and partners, and don’t rely solely on technology for communication (Wilson and Doz 2012).

## My biggest recommendation to change the dynamics of this case study would’ve been to ensure a productive, communicative, and qualitative virtual team from the beginning. According to the article, *Getting Virtual Teams Right,* recommends establishing the “rights”- team, leader, touchpoints, and technology. With these in place companies can use the best and lowest-cost global talent and significantly reduce their real estate costs (Ferrazzi, 2014). The right team must include people with excellent communication skills, the ideal group size, and individual roles and responsibilities. The right leadership should exhibit the following attributes: foster trust between managers and employees, encourage open dialogue, and clarify goals and guidelines set up by the team. Virtual teams should come together in person at certain times/touchpoints to ensure that people are on the same page and feel comfortable. These times should include the kickoff phase when initial communication occurs through video or in person, onboarding phase when new members are added to the team, and during milestones. Managers need to continue to keep the team updated regularly and praise individuals and group goals being met. Finally, technology should include: conference calls, direct calling/text messaging which takes place in real time, and discussion forums or virtual team rooms (Ferrazzi, 2014).

## In conclusion, fortunately as a society we are well more diverse and need to work in teams globally and internationally. If London and the U.S. would’ve incorporated the power of virtual teams then I do believe they could’ve reached most, if not, all of their goals in a timely fashion yielding great output. Communication is key in any facet of life, but especially in HR and it was apparent from paragraph one of the case study that it wasn’t present. I would personally like to reevaluate this same case study by changing two things - implementation of a virtual team from the beginning and requiring experience within the leadership of this project. The outcome, I feel, would yield inordinately different results.

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