

ICT Benefits Realisation Newsletter

Christmas 2009



Merry Christmas!

Special points of interest:

- How to set expectations
- What interventions work
- How to gather good data
- Updating status using Airwave data functionality
- Why users don't always call the help line

C-innovate Ltd, www.c-innovate.com

Welcome to the C-innovate newsletter, a quarterly publication discussing the business change aspects of ICT implementations – all with a people-centred focus. Now that the festive season is upon us why not put a bit of festive cheer into your system users by positively focusing on their needs. How? Well please read on...

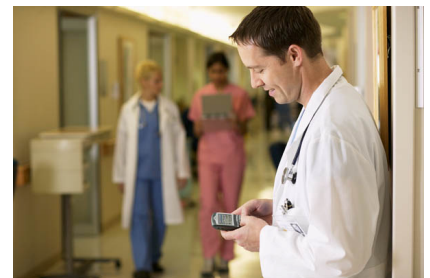
What is this thing called Benefits Realisation?

Before getting stuck into the nitty gritty of how you can successfully advocate your users needs, let's have a quick discussion on Benefits Realisation.

It's a reasonably self-explanatory term. It's all about realising the benefit of your investment in ICT – getting the best out of the ICT systems that your people use, to help ensure you get the best out of your people. The ideology is simple, but the reality is far more challenging. Close to 70% of IT projects fail to deliver the expected benefits—

and one of the key reasons for this is that users are not consulted enough, even treated as an incidental audience. Changing behaviour does not result from implementing new systems, it results from spending time and energy on the people side of the project.

Dr. Alan Chalmers wrote the best selling book, 'What Is This Thing Called Science?' - in which he clearly expresses that the term science is not as straight-forward as you might



think. Likewise benefits realisation is not as straightforward as we would like to think, but engaging in a problem solving process and addressing the needs of your users will go a long way to getting those benefits realised.

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Great expectations

Setting expectations appropriately is definitely a good thing to do. When implementing new systems there is almost inevitably a conflict between the expectations set at an organisational level and the realities of what can be achieved at the front line. Business cases build on ideal scenarios, in which systems are adopted quickly and systems are then used in the most efficient and effective

manner. And voila innumerable benefits flow. These ideal scenarios rarely transpire, so there is usually a gulf between what the organisation expects and what the front line users deliver.

So what can be done? Ironically setting the expectations of your users low-ish is more likely to have a positive effect on meeting the high demands of the organisation.

If the system is supposed to do x, y, z, initially tell your users it can do x, then if it turns out it can do y it's a bonus (and z as well, we're approaching a miracle). There is less likelihood of disappointment, resentment and reluctance because expectations are more likely to be met. So identify some short term wins and build on them.

Why not give it a go?



Go and see your users – even if it is snowing

What are the best interventions?

Whilst a system is being implemented (and long after for that matter) there are any number of things you can do to get your users engaged and enthused. Here are some things we would wholeheartedly encourage for they will make the world of difference:

1) **Training** – don't just train them on how to use the system.

Also give them some **awareness training**; explain why the system or upgrade is being implemented, how it fits into the bigger picture of the organisational objectives, what the benefits are expected to be (but ultimately you want them to be the judge of this) and so forth. It needn't take long, 10 minutes at the start of a training session.

Also **contextualise the training**; explain how, where, when, and why you expect the system will be used. How will it fit into existing work practices? – make it specific to the job role.

2) **Go and see the users.** If only for fifteen minutes once every few months, go out to their place of work and talk to them. Ask them how it's going, be informal, let the users speak their mind. If you don't already do this try it, make time for it, for it will have a big effect on your users and on you too.

3) **Support.** Getting the right support mechanisms in place is essential. Resources, as ever, though will be a big determinant of what can be offered. Try and understand what support mechanisms

work best and allocate resource accordingly.

4) **Usability issues.** Don't ignore them, address them if at all possible. Whilst a usability issue may seem trivial to the project team, it could mean the difference between an enthusiastic and a disengaged user.

5) **Congratulate them.** Tell them how well they're doing as often as you can—this of course will be easier if you've done the sensible thing and set expectations not too high.

These interventions are all about winning the hearts and minds of your users – do that and a big part of the battle is won. We'll talk about other ways to improve adoption in our next issue.

"..change goes through a series of phases - skipping steps creates only the illusion of speed and never produces a satisfying result." Kotter - Harvard Business Review

Maintaining a champions network

Last issue we discussed how to set up a champions network. We highlighted the importance of getting the right sort of people to be champions. There is a tendency to go for the super keen, super techy type; and why not, they probably want to be champions.

Unfortunately whilst being great at illustrating the potential benefits of a system to the organisational hierarchy, they are not necessarily the right people to be champions. Time and again we have seen superusers driving there less

enthusiastic peers to the edge of despair. You need to take time and pick your champions carefully – choose those who are respected by their colleagues; those who are good at their job, but not necessarily good with technology. Ideally people who have been brought round with time to the benefits of a new system.

Once you've got your champions network set up it will need some ongoing TLC to keep it maintained. This does not have to be especially onerous— just a few simple

steps to keep the champions motivated about their role. We'd recommend:

- Incentives: give them something, e.g. the chance to trial new systems before they are deployed
- Communication: send them updates on the project once or twice a month
- Supervisory support: get their supervisors to promote and support them
- Time: allocate time for champions to do aspects of their role (half an hour a week will probably do)



Happy Champions

Getting the best out of Airwave

For those Airwave radio users of you out there we have recently done a review of Airwave usage for a police force and this is what we found...

A key focus of the research was to review the usage of the hot key buttons on the radios for providing status updates – particularly the ‘At scene’ hot key officers use to inform control they have arrived at an incident. Much of the research came down to a comparison between the use of voice and the use of the buttons; was either a preferable

mechanism? They each had their pros and cons:

Button pros: Immediate system updates, ease of use, reduces radio traffic

Button cons: lack of awareness of colleagues and control, officers forget to press, doesn’t always work

Voice pros: awareness of colleagues and control

Voice cons: increases radio traffic, less discrete

Whilst overarching use of hotkey buttons would improve stats, system refinements

were required both with the handsets (to provide better feedback on the success of an update) and the back end systems (to highlight to controllers and supervisors the change of status).

The type of incident also had a significant bearing with Grade 1s preferring to use voice and Grade 2,3,4s happy to use buttons.

Overall, the research showed the force where best to allocate resource to align Airwave usage with best practice.



Are you getting the best out of Airwave?

Capturing good quality information

During the Airwave research just discussed we used two methods to collect data: an online survey and face-to-face interviews. The survey aimed to get a broad understanding of the issues (which it did with >1300 [>75%] responses) and the interviews aimed to explore the detail.

The outcome of both these data collection techniques was very much dependent on the questions asked. If you don’t ask the right questions, you’re not going to find out what you need to know. Sounds pretty obvious really, but developing a good quality questionnaire is an art in itself. Often five or more iterations are required; it needs to be tested and it needs to be reviewed before putting it into action. Try not to waste yours and other peoples time by asking poor questions.

An example of a poor question from a survey is ‘Do you think

you need more training?’ A user may need heaps more training, but 1) may not want to admit it, 2) thinks the training already provided was sufficient, 3) is unaware of the training they need, 4) have no desire to go through anymore training, 5) haven’t got the time...(I could go on) and so they answer ‘No’. Questions need to be more exploratory and specific, for example you could get them to rate different aspects of training or explore if the training has enabled them to do certain tasks.

Some of your survey respondents will elaborate and offer up additional information, but to really understand the detail face-to-face interviews need to be conducted. These will always highlight important issues not identified in an online survey – good questions again though are the key to success.

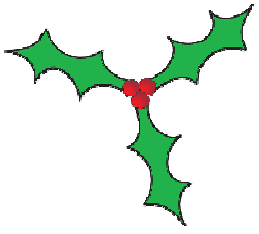
Before you start it is not only important to consider what you want from your data collection but also how you are going to analyse and use the results.

Want to know how to compile an excellent survey? Then read this book:



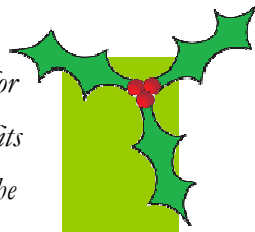
‘Mail and Internet Surveys’ by Don A. Dillman

“The only source of knowledge is from experience”
Albert Einstein



C-innovate

C-innovate have been providing user-centred consultancy services for approaching 10 years. Our mission is to help maximise the benefits of ICT systems through putting the system users at the centre of the design and implementation processes.



Sussex Innovation Centre
Science Park Square
Falmer
Brighton BN1 9SB

Phone: 01273 704774
Fax: 01273 704499
E-mail: info@c-innovate.com
Twitter: Cinnovate

ICT benefits realisation consultancy

www.c-innovate.com

Services that we provide include:

Benefits Realisation

Requirement Definition

Benchmarking

Evaluation

Project Consultancy

We use a wide range of methods to deliver our services including surveys, interviews, workshadows, group work, usability testing and process reviews, all of which can be delivered as stand-alone services if required. If you would like to discuss anything further please contact Paul Hampton on 07989539040 or 01273704774.

Anyone called the helpline recently?

How can we engender a culture that enables people to ask for help when they need it?

One thing that should be pointed out about helplines is that people only tend to call them when it's an absolute necessity. Even if you're expecting a positive outcome from you're call to the helpline (and we're all aware that this often isn't the case—my Virgin phone line still isn't working 2 months after installation. I feel quite distraught at the thought of having to call the helpline yet again), you will probably only make the call if it becomes a priority. If you can happily get along without the thing that needs addressing (who needs a phone anyway?) you're unlikely to

make the call. So when its up to the individual to search out help, they won't necessarily do so.

Take the example of handheld device deployments in the police. Police officers are used to finding their own solutions to problems and only calling for 'backup' if the problem is too large and then expecting a quick response. So getting them to go through the process of calling a helpdesk to explain the problem and admit that they can't fix it is a big leap. So when they do call the right response is vital.

If the organisation promotes a culture of 'we don't expect you to be the experts on this and we are here to sort this out quickly and easily' then the message will get out that the

helpline provides a good service.

However, for the helpdesk to be able to provide a good service it needs to be adequately resourced which means that the whole organisation needs to recognise the value of getting devices operational as quickly and easily as possible — if the helpdesk isn't well resourced then they risk sending a subliminal message that they do not really recognise the benefits of the devices.

It's another one of those chicken and eggs — if the helpdesk is well used how do you resource it? If it isn't well used, it probably needs better resourcing. Ho hum, or bah humbug, now to give the Virgin helpline a call...

“The help desk is a potentially powerful business tool, acting not only as the front line of support but with the ability to gather data from across an organisation to aid in IT management and strategy.”

*Professor Rita Marcella—
Aberdeen Business School*

