

NewsFlash by Linda Swerling

April 6, 2010 – *Technology is still moving fast. Here's a tale of a company that had to spend more time and money to upgrade to a new accounting system because it waited too long.*

SCARY NUDGE TO A 21ST CENTURY ACCOUNTING SYSTEM

Situation

A \$20 million engineering firm with 125 employees had been using the same accounting system for over 8 years. The firm received a shocking wake-up call when the developer announced that it was planning to stop technical support of the software.

Problem

The firm faced several challenging problems related to the software and to the accounting staff and procedures.

- Without technical support, any damage to the accounting database could not be repaired
- Data was not in real time
- Managers who needed information had to wait until accounting could produce a report
- Very little flexibility in slicing and dicing the data for good analysis
- Accounting data could not be exported into a spreadsheet or document
- Information was tracked and dispersed using several different systems – there was no way to follow the life cycle of a client
- Staff would need extensive training to be able to take advantage of methods and procedures used in the latest software

Solution

Because of the importance and size of the project, the firm knew it would need a full year to research, plan, and implement. It targeted the end of the fiscal year for changing over to the new system.

With our help, the firm

- Created a needs document (in writing!) that identified how the current system was used and what the wish list was for a new system.

- Established a budget for the project. It generally costs one and half times the software price for training, implementation, and customization.
- Researched vendors and products that could provide what the engineering firm needed. It was important that the software offered sophisticated project management tools.
- Assessed and qualified vendors through websites, discussion, demos, and sample reports.
- Provided the needs document to a smaller group and had them respond with customized demos that showed how their product would meet those requirements.
- Requested and evaluated proposals from the top two vendors.
- Spoke with references – large and small, new and long-term – to get a sense of each vendor's technical support, responsiveness, frequency of upgrades, ability to customize forms and reports.

Using this process, it was clear who the best vendor was so the commitment was made and the firm moved ahead to plan and execute the implementation.

Results

With the new accounting system, the firm now has the latest technology – with a plan to keep it up-to-date!

- Users have access to real-time data depending on their level of security.
- They use desktop dashboards and can study data and access reports in a variety of formats.
- The firm saves money and time because they no longer need to create and distribute reports.
- The technology is always up-to-date because of regular upgrades.
- The business is not at risk of losing its financial data.

If you want help with moving your organization into new technology now to save time and money later, please contact us at 617-277-0222 or linda@level2solutions.com