Business assurance improved through effective business information governance

A Fortune 500 telco operating in the Asia Pacific region achieved increased confidence in business decision making, reduced regulatory risk and eliminated unseen revenue leakage with effective governance of their business information resources.

A leading international telecommunications company – let's call them PhoneCo - with an annual sales revenue of over $20B, was struggling with inaccurate and inconsistent reporting of product metrics, which prevented the C-Suite staff from making confident business decisions, hindering business and revenue growth.

The various decision support systems within the organisation produced reports with differing figures that had a direct impact on product analysis, forecasting, clear tracking of revenue, and produced significant regulatory risk. Previous attempts to address these issues had resulted in excessively complex, costly and inefficient systems and processes across the organisation.

History

Over time, PhoneCo had implemented various projects to address these issues but none had achieved success. Typically these solutions added complexity to the reporting environment and exacerbated the problem.

PhoneCo had also invested considerable resources into a product master solution and an enterprise data warehouse, with the goal of providing a "single version of the truth".

A business information-focused approach

Intraversed's Mark Atkins and Terry Smith, and their team, analysed the processes used by the people of PhoneCo – they looked at what was done, why, how it differed between departments and how the information derived from raw data was created, used, stored, managed and retired when out of date.

This comprehensive analysis revealed that the overly complex environment that had evolved within PhoneCo included both the people-based processes and the system-based interaction processes. In fact, there were 17 different people-based processes and 12 different systems, each of which introduced their own set of problems. This meant that any final, combined figures had such deeply compounded problems that it took an alarmingly heavy use of resources to track and resolve discrepancies and led to necessary estimations and adjustments.

The solution

- **Language**. Difference in the definition of key metrics and terms between PhoneCo's business departments had to be eliminated. One Department would include figures for products that another Department believed to be irrelevant. Defining the products & services and associated business rules allowed alignment of reporting across the organisation.

- **Processes**. PhoneCo did not have a consistent, enterprise-wide life cycle management process for its service products. Misalignment between the activation and the billing of a service meant figures needed to be manually adjusted and reconciled further along in the process. Establishing ownership of the end-to-end process, a user forum for easy communication between users, and data quality and audit capabilities allowed reporting processes to align across the organisation.

- **Technology**. System inadequacies were creating unnecessary problems in timing, data availability and audit controls. This meant one Department's figures could not consistently be compared with or combined with the corresponding figures from another. PhoneCo needed to get very clear, from the top down, on what, how and when figures needed to be reported, and invest in the alignment of all business departments to these business rules.

The implementation of the solution

Mark, Terry and their team developed and implemented a plan that established PhoneCo's corporate business information management strategy. This included aligning product definitions across the organisation; establishing an easy and effective issues management process to address data quality; establishing a structure of governance and ownership of business terms and rules for product and revenue management.

Once the issues management process was established, problems within the current processes and systems were quickly identified and effectively resolved. A proof-of-concept reporting environment was developed resulting in rapid improvement in reporting figures and providing the prototype for the ongoing success of the solution for PhoneCo.

What can you learn from PhoneCo's experience?

The solution that finally gave PhoneCo the business assurance it needed was all about business information resource management.

Managing your business information resources well has four main elements:

- define your key business terms,
- ensure your resources are catalogued,
- develop a thorough and effective issues management process, and
- establish a governance environment to ensure ongoing effective management.

If you need some guidance in establishing business information resource management in your organisation, we can help.

Tell us where you're struggling. Take our free assessment at intraversed.com.au, we'd love to help you find areas you can address for early benefits.

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