Bellin's Information Technology Model for the Implementation of new Technologies

by

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Abstract

Bellin health not too long ago put into practice an IT governance model for implementing new technologies. This research paper will break down the current process that Bellin has and compare it to COBIT which provides a standard framework for developing and implementing new technologies.

Most of the processes that Bellin has implemented are mostly processes along the planning and organizing stages, there is not much on the implementation, delivery and support since this is a fairly new process and it is a work in progress. When a new technology is requested it needs to go through several check points, the request needs to meet certain criteria, if it meets this criteria it goes to be reviewed, then is assigned to a team depending on the type of technology. After is approved and a plan is in place, goes to IT leadership for approval, if this gets approved the request and plan is taken to combined leadership and then to the finance for final approval and fund allocations.

Introduction

Bellin Health System has implemented an IT governance model, this research paper will reviewed Bellin's IT governance model and compare it to COBIT's IT governance framework.

Statement of the Problem

Analyze the impact of regulations and policy associated with the implementation of new technologies.

Purpose of the Study

To compare Bellin's IT governance model with COBIT's model to gain a better understanding of how this regulations and policies impact the organization.

Definition of Terms

COBIT. *"*Control objectives for information and related technology" (p.8)

IT Governance. "Structure of relationships and processes to direct and control the enterprise in order to achieve the enterprise's goals by adding value while balancing risk vs. return over IT and its processes" (IT Governance Institute, p.9).

COBIT provides a standardized framework that links the IT processes with the organization's goals. Information Technology is a very important part in the organization's success, this is why it is very important for it to be linked to the goals of the organization and it needs to work as one with the enterprise governance. "Enterprise governance and IT governance cannot longer be considered separate and distinct disciplines" (IT Governance Institute, p. 6)

Before Bellin had its IT governance model, the department consisted of a 43 employees, all decisions were made by one person and there was no way to track the progress or success of the project. (R. Ronsman, personal communication, December 7, 2010)

After the implementation of Bellin's IT governance model, the IT team grew to 111 employees, they were divided in different teams, other departments and leadership where brought in to the decision making process. This new model would insure that the technology that was to be implemented complemented the needs, and the strategic goals of the organization. This governance model also allowed the organization to evaluate and manage the risk, and analyze the benefits that the new technology will bring to the organization. (R. Ronsman, personal communication, December 7, 2010)

Request for new technology

The first step in to this process was the evaluation of the way the request for a new project was received. Bellin needed to evaluate what request needed to be evaluated and needed to go through this process. Incoming request were divided in two sections Road Map Request which are request that emerge due to the strategic planning and goals in the organizations, or AD Hoc Request which are any other request that comes from individual departments within Bellin.

Only projects that will change or create an existing process, or that require the implementation of a new technology will go through this model, request of projects to fix existing processes or technology will not go through this model, this request will be assigned directly to the team in charge of that project. (R. Ronsman, personal communication, December 7, 2010)

To submit a request for a project, the requestor needs to fill out a Project Request Form, which is a 4 page form asking for details of the project, ownership, resource requirements, cost estimates, project priority, and, other information. The last three points are to be completed by the requestor along with the IT department.

The questions in the Project Request Form help the IT governance team align the request with the business requirements which are part of COBIT. These business requirements are important to be able to satisfy the business objectives (IT Governance Institute, p.10).

The first business requirement is the quality requirement and it includes quality, cost, and delivery. The second set of requirements is the Fiduciary requirements and they include effectiveness and efficiency of operations, reliability of information, and compliance with laws and regulations. The third requirement is security requirement and it includes confidentiality, integrity, and availability. (IT Governance Institute, p. 10).

Risk is assessed during this first stage, from the information collected there is not a well established plan or approach. If we compare it to COBIT's guidelines to assess risk, Bellin will be rated at 1 out of 5. Bellin is at the Initial/ Ad Hoc stage, which means that the IT department is aware of the risk but there is not a formal assignment to assess the risk. (IT Governance Institute, p. 60).

Check Point and Review

Once the request has gone through its first stage, it has been evaluated, the risk, cost, effort, and is in line with the business requirements. It goes to the next step which is the check point and review. Here the CIO and the director of IT review the request, this request are divided in three categories, small, medium and large. This is based in the cost, number of hours to complete and the number of hours to maintain. (R. Ronsman, personal communication, December 7, 2010)

During this Process the CIO and the IT director come up with a strategic plan and assign the project to a team depending on the objective. COBIT presents nine control objectives for defining a strategic information technology plan. There is only 2 control objectives that are actively been applied.

Objective 1.1 IT as a part of of the Organization's Long and Short-range Plan is one of the control objective that is applied, senior management do develop plans to fulfill the organization's goals, these plans are reviewed every 3 months with the entire Bellin leadership team. Objective 1.6 Communication of IT plans, is also applied during this leadership meetings, all current projects that IT is working on are communicated and updated every 3 months. (IT Governance Institute, p.40)

COBIT also rates the stage in which the strategic information plan is. This rating goes from 0 or non-existing to 5 or optimized. According to the processes that Bellin has implemented, Bellin will be rated at 3 which means that Bellin has and optimized process. This means that the process is well planned and communicated but it lacks monitoring to measure the effectiveness of the projects. (IT Governance Institute, p.49)

Technical, Clinical, Efficiency or Technology Review

The CIO and the IT director assign a project with the strategic plan to be developed. There are four different teams, the IT Technical Review team, the Betty Project or Clinical team,

the Efficiency team and the Common Technology team. Each of this specialized teams gets the projects assigned based on the nature of the request. If it is a project that will affect the clinical part of the organization; the Betty or clinical team will review the project.

These teams have to analyze the benefit, the risk, the cost, and come up with a plan for the implementation. This stage defines the IT organization and relationship which is one of COBIT's processes.

IT/Leadership, Combine Leadership and Finance

These last three steps in this process are where other departments in the organization get involved to review and decide if this project actually fits the clinical, operational or financial objectives that the company has set. After the previous teams have come up with a proposal for the project, it is presented to the IT leadership, they will review the proposal, if approved they will take this to the Combined Leadership team, this team include members of the boards of directors, the president of the company, the CFO, CIO, CMO, among others. Only when the project is greater than four thousand dollars the project has to go to finance for approval. (R. Ronsman, personal communication, December 7, 2010)

"IT governance provides the structure that links IT processes, IT resources and information to enterprise strategies and objectives" (IT Governance Institute, p.6). As we can see the process that Bellin has incorporated does link the Information Technology department and its processes to implement any technology with the goals of the organization. Bellin used contractors to come up with a specific IT governance model to fit its needs, and as we can see it has some of the components that COBIT uses as a framework, for planning and organizing.

For many of the other processes that COBIT has like acquiring and implementing or deliver and support, Bellin is still learning and working to implement this processes.

References

IT Govenance Institute. (2004). *COBIT Student Book.* IT Governance Institute.