

Transition Planning and Senior Management

Where migration is concerned Senior Management must be part of YOUR team.

The Senior Management of an organization is charged with the fiduciary responsibility to preserve the organization and provide stewardship of its assets and continuity of operations for the stakeholders.

This means it is part of the job function of the senior management team to connect with the IT group to ensure ongoing operations. In publicly traded corporations there is an obligation for directors to ensure IT has a continuity plan. The SEC brought this duty to the forefront during the period leading up to Y2K.

The time is now to enlist the aid of your senior managers for budgeting and to provide guidance and resources as you prepare to transition from a supported platform to one that will be phased out. Ensuring that your organization's transition is successful will take careful planning.

MB Foster – an HP Platinum Migration Partner – will assist your IT team in building a complete plan for the transition including budgets, resources required, training, deliverables, time frames and milestones.

Senior managers all recognize that equipment is amortized over a period of time and then replaced. The difference with computer applications is that they support the business functions and the data is the lifeblood of the company. Plans need to be made to ensure that there is ample time to discover the needs of the organization, evaluate options, make the decision, train the staff and implement the new solution. Senior managers will know how to fund the project by spreading the cost out over several budget years and/or locating several other sources of funding.

But I thought this was a technical issue? Actually it's a business issue for two reasons:

- 1) How are the current IT applications and infrastructure suited to your business and its plans over the next 3 to 5 years? If the current applications are not a good fit for the future then there is a requirement to select a new application.
- 2) How will your IT organization support the current system over the next 3 to 5 years? To determine this you will need to provide a detailed description of how the hardware, operating system and application will be supported.

Who specifically will be responsible for each aspect of the support (inside or outside staff)? It is important to note if you have employees who are expected to retire during this project.

Migration is really all about risk and risk "avoidance" – this is what managing is all about – placing appropriate investments where the risk level is understood. Decisions have to be made and options considered.

How do we start?

You need to designate time to plan. The stages of this kind of transition are:

- 1) Go through a discovery process which will produce a high level plan outlining the business functions, the reports and data extracts that support those functions and the applications impacted.
- 2) From this high level plan derive a detailed plan broken down by application and indicating if the application is to be replaced, migrated, rewritten or retired. Don't forget a wish list for each application – there may be an opportunity to "Innovate BEFORE you migrate".
- 3) Develop time lines for budgeting and resource requirements (IT equipment, people with certain skill sets, etc). Know your GAP - the difference between the current business and technical baselines and the target business and technical baselines. Close the GAP with training, software acquisition and by building code.
- 4) Schedule the resources/ execute the plan!
- 5) Do a post implementation review as each application comes on-line. Look at next steps in your "life after migration" and learn from what went right and what went wrong.

So what's next?

Set up an appointment with the members of your senior management team to be sure that they are aware that HP is phasing out the HP e3000. It is important that management take into account the impact on continuing business operations. Although the plan may be to stay on the HP e3000 for years to come this must be a decision that takes into account all the factors in the business. It is not a technical decision but a business one.

MB Foster can help with the Executive Seminar by delivering a one (1) hour webinar on this topic.

Enlist the help of transition experts to guide your team through a discovery process. MB Foster can help deliver an application-by-application impact, and current status for your management team; we will help you with or even do the presentation with you.

From this discovery process MB Foster will have delivered a presentation that includes complexity, risk, cost and timetable associated with your transition.

It will take time to examine each of the applications in order to build a detailed plan for long term support, migration or replacement. This detailed planning will take into account all interfaces between the applications and internal or external system, and the staffing required to maintain or migrate. Having your current applications documentation up-to-date will help during application evaluation. It is important to know what you're currently supporting. All of the resources required will be identified and the time lines laid out. Once this estimate is presented for budget approval MB Foster will partner with your team to provide a successful transition.

Our success is your success – our 25+ years in business provides us with the expertise to help guide your team successfully through this process.

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions on this article please feel free to contact, Birket Foster, Chairman and CEO of MB Foster at 1-800-ANSWERS (that's 1-800-267-9377) extension 204 or birket@mbfoster.com

About MB Foster

MB Foster, a provider of data access and delivery solutions to the Hewlett-Packard community for over 27 years is a selected HP Platinum Migration Partner. The company provides migration planning services and tools to assist HP e3000 customers in their move to other platforms, as well as proven data access solutions which drive mission-critical IT operations around the world. As a Certified Microsoft Developer, an Oracle Partner, an IBM Business Partner, and a Sun Java Development Partner, MB Foster has a wealth of knowledge specifically focused on data – where all business logic and critical information resides.

The company is headquartered in Chesterville, Ontario, Canada. For information on its distributors, products and services, visit www.mbfoster.com.