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## Preface

In 2011, I started my career as CIO of a large Philippine company; during that time, the first thing I wanted to do was to set the organization right, in terms of its structure, as well as processes, as this would set the pace for the many years to follow. Got it wrong, and I would have had to live with that mistake for many years. What was clear to me at that time is that there were two very different components in IT: Strategy, which is long term; and tactical and operational concerns, which is short term. One cannot do without the other, and I was expected to address both, knowing the fact that I only had a very limited honeymoon period in my hands. I could not address long term without fixing the operational issues first, and yet, strategy would always be in the back of my mind.

The other very apparent difference for me was that of managing operations versus projects, and I wondered if what many companies were doing at that time was right: Mixing resources to do both. So I did what I always do when unsure, which is to research to support some of my suspicions, and I came out relatively empty handed. Yes, I was already aware at that time of some of the industry standards, but these were high level and difficult to interpret on how to actually execute them, worst of all, I did not have any time to do that. And so, I did the next thing I would usually do, which was to roll-up my sleeves, put on my thinking cap, and try to dissect and understand what really would make sense. This was the start of my practical experience that is reflected in this book.

The book starts with just that: Discussing the ideal/suggested table of organization in an IT department, and the rationale of why I have reached such a conclusion. It separates distinctly strategy from day-to-day operations, as well as projects from operations, the two most important functions of a CIO. It goes on, discussing the most pressing need: Managing operations in Chap. 4. This chapter is based on some of the best industry standards and their nomenclature in the field, with a difference: I try to explain exactly what each party is to do, and how it should be done at a very practical level. The theory exists out there, but how to make it practical is a different matter. For in operations, once the structure is correct, the next challenge is how to handle tickets (e.g., requests and incidences), which are the basic day-to-day of the operations team. This means how to record changes, escalate them, address them, test them, release them, and possibly roll them back if necessary. This brings us to the typical lifecycle for operations' services: Planning

& Design—Release—Maintain—Retire. Each of these phases has its own distinct aspects which should be monitored and managed, including availability and capacity management. Operations are also linked to IT strategy, and we discuss when this strategy translates to a project, or to operational changes, and if the former, how these project(s) link to operations.

Chapter 5 discusses projects, the other lifeline of IT, and in this chapter we make a marked distinction between the methodologies to be used in projects with that to be used in operations. It is not recommended to mix these, and as such discuss IT project management in detail. We first start with the basic project management principles, but zero in on the way these general principles are to be used in IT projects. IT projects are perhaps one of the most difficult projects to manage because they deal only with intangibles. Furthermore, the people that usually define the success of a project are the end users which the CIO has no control of, but who must influence using some special people skills (so-called change management). We spend time discussing some of the most critical parts of IT projects: Analysis, design, cut-over period, and go-live and support phases. Each of these requires its own particular documentation and techniques. Included in this chapter is a discussion on some of the most failure-prone components of a project: Customizations, testing, and people change management.

Documentation is discussed at length for both operations and projects, because adapting to the waterfall standard of project methodology, it is really the lifeline for IT to be sustainable, as well as projects transferable to operations.

What I also learned during my stint as CIO was that the cut-over from projects to operations was many times the most critical. People from these two distinct teams did not like to talk to one another, but is necessary for the sustainability of the service that has just been designed. Likewise I searched for material and found very little on this subject, so I decided to develop our own guidelines and procedures, these are shared in Chap. 6. Starting with a discussion on the typical different environments (development, testing, training, production), and then aspects which seem like common sense and are usually taken for granted, but are actually very much project-specific: Backup and restore procedures, release management procedures, data migration, data quality, interfaces, and most importantly, roles and responsibilities of operations, project personnel, and third parties during the go-live and support phase. We have come up with a checklist of tasks to be undertaken before the go-live to increase its probability of success, which have been refined throughout the years, the basis for this chapter.

Once operations and projects are in place and the fire-fighting is finished, the next thought that should be in a CIO's mind is how to sustain this, as well as how to minimize issues. Fire-fighting and addressing issues should consist of less than 20 % of one's time, but in order for that to happen, the proper governance should be put in place, which is discussed in Chap. 7. We first start on how company governance is related to IT governance, and how these in turn are related to policy, and international standards such as ISO20000, ISO9001. Operations governance is actually embedded as part of the processes by which operations works with, but project governance is somewhat more "loose", so that the chapter delves mainly on

project governance. Governance in projects refers to what must be ensured by the Project Manager, and once more, is based on the minimum required documentation that must be produced at different phases of a project. Documentation standardization is in fact the key in making projects successful, as this is the tool necessary to monitor status, and manage accordingly. We discuss the proposed four basic documents for any project: Project plan, issue registry, request registry, and project deliverables checklist. We also discuss the roles and responsibilities of different personnel in an IT project, because oftentimes, projects also fail because of unrealistic expectations in the project team, or mismatch between expected and actual skills and roles.

Chapter 8 is an overview on one of the hottest topics in IT project management methodologies today: Agile-Scrum. The surprising thing for me is that although many of the topics laid out above do not have much reference material, a lesser (at least from my point of view) subject like Agile-Scrum has tons of material written on it. As such, I do not attempt to write about Agile-Scrum in detail, but merely to contrast it with the waterfall approach (which is the basic precept for much of my material), and identify when it would be useful to use.

Operations, projects, and governance, how does all this glue together? If the number of projects and the breadth of operations are huge, it is suggested to have ad hoc portfolio managers that will oversee these according to specialty. If not, the ultimate portfolio manager is the CIO herself. From the point of view of the portfolio manager, he is interested in knowing how his operations and projects are performing, but would not be interested in the details unless he needs to dive into them (e.g., there are issues to be resolved). As such, he defines the governance for his set of operations and projects so that he can get accurate and timely information from which to act. One of his main tasks as well is to think beyond the projects and see if the projects are still meaningful or not to the company, and if new projects or operational initiatives need to be defined in order to align IT to company strategy. The portfolio management as discussed in the Chap. 9, can be defined as a cycle once more: Planning and design, assessment and communicating, and portfolio rebalancing. On top of this cycle is portfolio governance by which the different portfolio components are to comply with, as well as his monitoring and control tools.

Well, this is all for now. I have written this book to hopefully bridge the gap which I think still exists today, so that anyone who is in the same situation I was 5 years ago would have a much easier time.

Lastly, anyone interested in receiving a copy of my templates in MS office format, please contact me at my email below and I will gladly reply.

Many thanks and good luck with all your IT operations!

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