



The Ultimate Solution Provider for Apparel Industry

Success

A 3D-rendered staircase with grey steps and white edges, ascending from the bottom left towards the top right. The steps are slightly offset, creating a sense of depth and movement.

**How to Apply
a Management System
Effectively?**

Whitepaper

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How to Apply a Management System Effectively?

Many companies who failed to successfully apply a system not because of poor functionality, but exactly the opposite. It is of course important to choose a system which has powerful features, however, too many systems today are function-rich, some may be abundant with functionality that makes it difficult to learn and burdensome to use.

There is no one best system, but a system which suits your needs the best. It is crucial to select a system which has useful and practical features but at the same time easy to learn and use. There is no point in spending time and money on a system with lot of redundant features that you do not even understand and would never use.

1 Define Objectives and Success

Regardless of which system or software you choose to implement, the first step is to define the objectives of using software and the meaning of successful application. You should have a clear idea what you want to achieve with the system: to increase productivity, to improve efficiency, to reduce operational costs, to speed up supply chain...

To achieve the objectives, it is important to precisely define the problems you want to solve and the measurements of success, e.g.,

- to systemize specific business processes;
- to reduce over-purchased materials – by how much?
- to reduce the order lead-time – by how long?

Make sure your objectives are clear, and remember to focus your effort on attaining the objectives.

2 Prioritize Objectives

Very often there are too many problems you want to solve and too many areas you want to improve, it is thus important to prioritize your problems and objectives. Do it step-by-step to reduce information overload and user-reluctance.

Once you have achieved 70-80% of a particular objective, you may move on to attaining the next objective. Bear in mind there is no one perfect system, do not waste time digging on the remaining 20% which may cost 80% of your effort and time.

3 Understand Existing Business Processes and Identify Ways for Improvement

A detailed planning to understand all of the existing business processes is vital. Talk to the right staff to find out the data elements involved, how the data is collected, the types of management reports using, etc. Along with this, identify ways to improve business process. It will be a good opportunity to improve business process while implementing a new system.

4 Avoid Modifications & Customization

Modifications and customization not only cost money and time, but may also never end. Once you have selected the right system, there should be no need to modify it. If the system does not meet your expectation, try to find out:

- Is it really necessary?
- What are the benefits for the modifications?
- Are you using the system correctly?

Do not assume customization is needed as something you require does not exist in the software. Sometimes the system may be able to do what you need but you simply do not know how to apply. It may be different after you have got a better understanding on the software. The system may actually facilitate a better business process. Talk to your software provider and consultants for suggestions.

5 Set Up an Implementation team

A common mistake in rolling out a system is to leave the whole implementation job to an IT staff, as the management assumes this staff is not only knowledgeable in hardware and/or software, but is also familiar with the entire business processes. This may be true, but in many cases, the IT staff may not be clear about the actual business processes, and finds it difficult to apply the system in daily operation.

Pick among the best representatives from each department to form a small implementation team. The individuals chosen should have intense knowledge of the processes in their departments and are open-minded. They have the confidence of their colleagues, and usually have the right attitude. The implementation team should be answering to a steering committee consists of a group of executives that have the responsibility of seeing the project succeed and make sure any stumbling block is removed.

6 Gain Top Management Support

Top management support and involvement in rolling out the system are important. Make sure top management executives are there responsible for motivating staff, providing necessary resources, making high-level decisions, and ensuring the project is on schedule. Without top management support, it is common to experience more resistance from users.

7 Get Employee Involvement

Involving all users in implementation is critical for success as they are the ones who will end up using it. By getting them involved, it will diminish the resistance to change, which is inherent in human beings. Good communication is needed to help employees understand that the changes will indeed add value to the whole enterprise.

8

Provide Sufficient End-user Training

Poorly trained staff is unlikely to avail the full benefits of the system. Prior to going live on the new system, identify the people who need training, develop training materials and a system for training the staff. The more employees get exposed to the new system, the more they will get familiar and be confident in using it. It is also important to have a clear support program to assist users in adjusting to the new system.

9

Monitor How the System is Performing

The process of applying a system does not end at go-live, system application is an on-going process. Make sure you understand how the system is performing and if the business processes are still going well. Ask the questions:

- What effect does the system have on the company?
- Are employees using the system effectively?
- Is the system making business more efficient?

After the initial implementation, most user issues are related to lack of understanding on the software functions instead of having problems with the system, that's why a good user support program is needed to address the issues. Refresher training should also be provided on an on-going basis.

Conduct post-implementation audit to see what business benefits the system is delivering. This will help in identifying areas of under-performance, employees under-trained, and opportunities for on-going improvement.

Conclusion

To optimize the benefits of your system not only requires thorough understanding on the software, but also top management commitment and support, user involvement, a proper action plan, as well as on-going support processes. If you do not have the expertise in system implementation, seek for assistance, an experienced implementation consultant can help you in applying the system effectively.

About iGarment

iGarment is a professional software provider of one-stop management system solutions for the apparel industry. As a pioneer who has been devoted in the research and development of application software since 1987, iGarment provides comprehensive and flexible solutions which allow enterprises to perform real-time and cross-country management. Our extensive knowledge and expertise in the industry enable us to deliver business solutions meeting the specific needs of apparel enterprises, and ensure a smooth running of their day-to-day business in the most effective and efficient way.

For more information, please visit www.igarment.net or send email to sales@igarment.net.

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