

# **Do you like your company to be flying by the seat of your pants???**

Airlines pay meticulous attention to processes; it's this that makes flying the safest form of travel. So why do we in I.T not take a leaf out of their book?

If I.T, and more importantly businesses paid meticulous attention to processes, then this attention to detail would definitely remove some of the uncertainty out of any I.T project undertaken.

Airlines have learnt that if you are meticulous about each and every process, then the risk of any deviation from that process is infinitely lowered. Pre-flight check lists must leave nothing to chance, highly qualified individuals go through each and every check, and nothing is left to chance within the process. If the process is right, and followed with that much attention to detail, then a by product of that is the safety standards set by airlines. Because of this, safety is the outcome of strict processes, rather than a part of an overall process.

I.T is such a unique area of businesses and a unique industry in itself. Demands are placed right across the board to all I.T staff to improve delivery timescales, improve efficiency, speed up processes, and reduce costs while satisfying increasing level of demands from businesses, users and regulatory bodies. The problem is that I.T managers, or business managers try to tackle these problems as individual entities, these problems are addressed in an unstructured way that can easily, and quite often does, lead to adversity and problems further along.

Problems have to be looked at as one problem and to address this problem as a number of steps. So a process has to be put into place, one that works well and leaves nothing to chance. Fundamental approaches to system analysis, design, development, testing, implementation and support must always be viewed as a highly important process. Think of it as the checklist for a pre-flight check. Each step must be looked at in great detail, nothing left to chance and must be completed to a satisfactory level before you move on to the next check, or process.

Lets not forget the low level attention to detail. How many companies actually have complete checklists for maintaining servers? These checklists having to be run through once a week, or every time a change is made on that particular machine. Without doubt, if such processes were in place and such great attention was placed on these, then the servers in question would become almost perfect in reliability.

Managing problems is what most companies do. They manage the current problem and move onto the next. Processes though can help you become preventative rather than a reactive manager / company. Processes allow managers and individuals to predict issues and allow them to be dealt with before they become a problem that must be managed.

So why don't you have such processes in place? It's all about time with I.T and business. Businesses start a project, they spend such great time making the right decision, building system and user processes, examining ROI etc. Once the business has made its choice it wants it implemented yesterday. What really needs to occur after that is the next step of a bigger process. Has your business / internal I.T looked really at test environments, implementation strategies, support issues, upgrade issues and more importantly has processes been put into place that manage all of this in a structured way. Finally have you got the right people with the right skills to carry out the tasks required of them to an expected level of quality? This is tricky; often businesses and I.T departments overlook this. You wouldn't have the stewardess running through the pre-flight check list. Yet in I.T how many times do the wrong people get used to carry out a task.

With such meticulous detail to processes, you may well find that timescales look longer, however when you step back at the end of the project and take a look at the project as a whole. Timescales are often shorter. Why?

Well its simple, like the pre-flight check, if nothing is left to chance then the plane takes off on time. If not all the checks are done, then there could well be a problem that leads to a delay. You miss the flight window. If you don't deviate from your known path, then you will be ready when you need to be and won't miss that flight window.

By managing complexity and putting strict processes in place and leaving nothing to chance, the airline industry really does distinguish itself. One degree consulting knows the importance of processes and view the airline industry as a shining example of how processes should be built and followed. Because of this we at one degree have strict processes that we follow our selves, and may ask you to follow yourself....