A panel session—The contribution of planning to information systems productivity

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PANEL OVERVIEW—Charles C. Tucker

The traditional approach to information systems development has been to plan at the project level. This leads to the development of independent systems, each with its own data, for each user. Most organizations suffer from the following shortfalls that result from this traditional approach:

1. Systems which are not supportive of business plans
2. Systems that are not easily adaptable to organizational changes
3. Data which is redundant and inconsistent
4. Systems that are difficult to interconnect
5. "Squeaky wheel" priority determination.

Management views this in terms of systems with short useful lives, which are expensive to operate and maintain, and support areas with little impact on the overall success of the company.

The Business Systems Planning methodology used at Fox overcomes these shortfalls by:

1. Tying information systems plans directly to business plans
2. Designing systems around business processes so they are organizationally independent
3. Treating data as a company resource so it can be shared and managed
4. Laying out the overall architecture or network first so the individual systems can be easily interfaced as they are developed
5. Providing a logical framework for determining implementation priorities.

Because of our investment in Business Systems Planning, we expect that the information systems we develop in the future will last longer, cost less to develop and operate, support business plans better, and address our most important information requirements first.

THE INFORMATION SYSTEMS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: A FRAMEWORK FOR INFORMATION SYSTEMS PLANNING—John A. Zachman

Technology is precipitating a change in management’s perception of the role of information systems (I/S) in the business environment. Business Systems Planning is an analytical methodology that has evolved in an attempt to better define this role and manage I/S more effectively in support of management.

As a result of a number of Business Systems Planning analyses, it is becoming apparent that the key to increasing I/S productivity in light of the new role being defined, is the recognition of several components of the overall I/S Management System that must be managed uniquely.

These components include:

1. A Strategic Plan and planning process that looks externally at the business, as well as integrating with the more typical Management Control and Operational Control plans and planning processes which look internally at I/S.
2. An Information Architecture that depicts the business and serves as the "preliminary design" of the integrated product that the I/S organization is in place to build.
3. A Data Architecture (and its attendant management facility) that protects the consistency of data for management's measurement purposes, as well as controls the project development activities to insure their conformance to the Information Architecture.

These components of the I/S Management System are over and above the traditional Development and Operations components, well recognized as requiring unique attention, supporting the role of I/S as it is perceived in today's typical environment. The recognition and management of the additional components will have a substantial impact in increasing productivity by minimizing systems redesign for data integration purposes, minimizing maintenance activity...