

CM0343 – Individual Project: Initial Project Plan

Determining the Scope for Future Automation of Banking Processes

Introduction

People play a major role in the operations of banks today. However, they are expensive resources which can show a lack of consistency of service. While two situations may appear similar, there can invariably be different outcomes when humans are involved. This can be caused by a variety of traits, ranging from personality to quality of training received.

Accelerating change describes the increase in speed of development over time, meaning newer technology is released quicker than previous versions. As more systems become computerized, the value placed on a human workforce in banks may diminish over time, therefore reducing the need for the current levels of costly human resources.

By gathering insights from existing bank stakeholders and published missions statements, a purpose for a 'generic bank' can be derived. Using this purpose, the generic bank can be defined and modelled to produce a comprehensive list of activities in which humans currently play a crucial role. These activities will be analysed in turn, to determine whether existing or developing technologies can be used to do the task to the same standards.

Methods

The primary tool used during this project will be Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), which includes the use of rich pictures and creation of a root definition, conceptual model and enterprise model, which can then be compared with reality. This comparison could include an interview with an existing bank employee, which would also provide a valuable insight into how staff would perceive these changes. The enterprise model will be developed for the generic bank as a whole, showing the various departments and their tasks. This will be used to analyse specific tasks with the view of concluding whether or not they could be computerised. A large part of the background research stage of the project will be studying Brian Wilson's SSM principles as well as study into the background of the problem itself.

One of the main challenges of this project will be validating the model for the generic bank and seeing how it can relate to the real world.

There are currently occasions where customers have to deal with human employees at banks, such as opening accounts in branch and making a complaint. As part of the recommendations of the project, a number of processes will be selected and described using process modelling highlight where changes could be made.

Aims and Objectives

The overall objective of the project will be to determine the scope for future automation of banking processes using the methods described above. Once this is defined, recommendations will be made for further action with evaluations of their perceived effectiveness. Examples of benefits that may be seen could be cost savings, greater efficiency, reduced waste and increased consistency.

As part of the recommendations and evaluation, a number of key questions can be answered relating to the increased use of computers in the banking industry, such as;

- Will computerising more systems save banks money?
- How will existing services and products be affected?
- Will these process changes increase consistency of service?
- How will customers react to the changes?

The two reports that will be produced during this project will offer an interim and final view of the progress of the project and its conclusions. The interim report, to be completed by 16/12/11, will primarily look at the current progress of the project and review the background research that was undertaken. At this point, the project is estimated to be at the SSM stage and an ongoing assessment of its progress will also be included. If any of the requirements or objectives of the project has changed during the first stage, these will also be explained here. This report will be written concurrently with various stages of the project.

The final report, which has a deadline of 4/5/12, will include the remainder of the SSM work, a completed enterprise model and process models, along with the analysis and relevant conclusions. This final report will aim to answer the overall question posed by the project, by taking all work into account and providing a balanced view of the theory. As with the Interim report, the final report will be produced alongside the remaining stages at this point.