

What is a Bridge Person?

- Someone Who...
- Understands and values the capabilities and perspectives of all stakeholders
- Works comfortably with **functional**, **technical**, management and executive constituencies
- Reconciles multiple perspectives to keep the project moving toward the shared goal
- May or may not be the project manager

Characteristics of Bridge Person ...

- Understands the Project or System Goals
- Understands Requirements and Concerns of all Constituencies
- Comfortable in **Functional** and **Technical** Worlds
- Strong Interpersonal and Communication Skills
- Strong Management and Problem-Solving Skills
- Intuitive and Flexible
- Decisive
- "Meeting Endurance"
- Relational Practice Skills

Relational Practice Skills

- Share Information Across Organizational Boundaries
- Foster Teamwork and Collaboration
- Think Systemically
- *"Doing whatever it takes to get the job done"* (¹Fletcher, p. 1)

Bridge Roles

- Understand and Communicate **Functional** Considerations of Application
- Understand and Communicate **Technical** Considerations of Project
- Anticipate and Resolve Potential System and Process Obstacles

Functional Considerations

- Build Relationships with **Functional** Players
- Educate and Consult with Users on IT Management and Strategic Use
- Explain Value of Technology to **Functional** Managers
- Create Reusable Solutions and Disseminate Best Practices to Other Units
- Set Stage for Appropriate Expansion of System Functionality after Implementation (³Mann, p. 257)

Technical Considerations

- Ensure that IT is Aligned with Business and Assists in Process Reengineering (⁴Mann, p.257)
- Build Credibility of IT with End-users
- Improve Business Orientation of IT Staff
- Expand IT Skill Sets

Project Considerations...

- Make **Technical** and **Functional** Staff Aware of Other's Capabilities and Responsibilities
- Translate User Needs into IT Products/Services
- Act as User Liaison Beyond Analysis and Design
- Get User Support for IT Initiatives and Vice Versa
- Identify Opportunities for Education and Training
- Evaluate Completed Projects
- Address Dissonance Between IT and Users
- Coordinate Multiple Projects
- Incorporate All Considerations into Project Plan

Obstacles to Bridge Person's Success

- Organizational Structure
- Threatening to Self-Interests
- Bridge Position not Valued
- Lack of Access
- Culture of Autonomy
- Relational Skills not Valued

Overcoming Bridge Obstacles

- Inflexible structures impede but do not preclude project progress
- Education
- Executive Sponsorship
- Grass Roots Support

Bridge Person Traits

- Embraces Technology with a Purpose (not just for technology's sake)
- Oriented toward Service and Real Function-ality
- Breadth of Experience

Skills to Look For

- Process Analysis
- Grasp of **Technical** Considerations
- Ability to Assess Relevance and Significance of Information
- Problem Solving
- Communication
- Mediation and Conflict Resolution
- Planning

What Does Bridge Need to Know?

- **Technical** Knowledge
 - **Technical** tools
 - **Technical** roles involved in the project
 - **Technical** best practices
 - **Technical** approach
 - Isolation
 - Pattern identification
 - Structural approach
 - How to communicate with **technical** staff
 - IT **technical** standards and procedures

What Does Bridge Need to Know?

- **Functional** Knowledge
 - Knowledge of the goals and processes of each **functional** area
 - Process analysis techniques
 - Constraints on user offices
 - Internal relationships and reporting structures
 - Communication channels within the organization
 - Impact of competing organizational priorities
- System/Project Knowledge
 - Scope of project and of software
 - **Technical** architecture – high level
 - “How the system thinks”
 - How to objectively and intuitively assess **functional** requirements against delivered software capabilities
 - Planning
 - How to keep them flexible
 - How to keep project on track

Translation Skills!

- Ability to understand and restate requirements and expectations so as to be comprehensible to all parties
 - Reduce surprises
 - Increase consistency

What Really Works?

- Growth, Achievement and Effectiveness Occur Best in Network of Connection and Support
- Interdependence is a goal
- Not only what one achieves oneself, but what one enables others to achieve, is important

Without a good bridge person, project statistics:

16% Successful | 53% Challenged | 31% Impaired

- Processes Work as Designed but do Not Meet User Needs
- Systems are Not User-Friendly
- Systems are Difficult and Costly to Maintain
- Degree of Customizations is High
- Institutional Community is Dissatisfied
- A Good System Becomes an Inferior Application
- Return on Investment is Diminished

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