

ATYPICAL SUCCESS OF THE INTRANET FOR BAYER IN GREATER CHINA REGION

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Abstract

Research on the typical success or typical failure of Intranet is pervasive in the literature. The critical antecedent factors are identified in some conceptual frameworks. However, this paper attempts to illustrate an atypical success of the Intranet for Bayer in Greater China Region Revamp Project (IBGCRRP). The author witnesses the whole implementation of IBGCRRP. Employing action research methodology and comparing the critical factors of IBGCRRP with those of the classical framework in three dimensions, i.e. organizational, individual, and technological, the author attempts to discuss how success could be retained in the real-world context, with the absence of some critical antecedent factors that once-believed determine the success or failure for an Intranet, but with the presence of Intranet prosumer, a combination of “PROducer” and “conSUMER” in the Intranet context.

Keywords: *Atypical Success, Action Research, Intranet Prosumer, Intranet Prosumer Participation.*

1 INTRODUCTION

The Intranet is an organization-wide internal network to enable users to find, use, and share documents and Web pages, and thus facilitates the internal communication. The complexity of Intranet is determined by that of the organizational structure and culture. Bayer AG is a Fortune 500 multinational company, with three main subgroups, i.e. Bayer Material Science, Bayer Health Care, and Bayer Crop Science. Bayer in Greater China region, including Bayer (China) Limited, Bayer (Hong Kong) Limited, and Bayer (Taiwan) Limited, is explicitly distributed in geography and implicitly diversified in culture. To integrate the whole subgroups, business functions, and holding company to stand as a whole entity, Bayer (China) Limited launched IBGCRRP in July 2005, with a budget of 10.7 million Chinese Yuan Renminbi (1 million Euro or 1.4 million US Dollar).

The author, educated with orthodox Information System philosophy, was invited to take charge of the project. With the primary investigation, the author found, according to the classical theory, it a mission impossible if the project finally turns out to be a success, because the evidence of the antecedent factors of Intranet implementation was perceived as absent, or at best very weak. However, in March 2007, with over 20-month efforts, the IBGCRRP was successfully finished and highly remarked by all the relevant stakeholders. The author analyzed and summarized this **atypical success**. There must be some hidden factor which

used to be neglected beneath the success. Retrospect to the whole project made the author believe that the presence of **Intranet prosumer** is the very factor.

The following sections are arranged in this sequence: firstly, the author starts from literature review to indicate that the result of IBGCRRP implementation disconfirms the existing theories, and thus the author identifies the research objective; secondly the author presents the research methodology of this paper; thirdly, the author conducts the action research through comparison and frameworks the Intranet prosumer participation in general; finally, the author draws conclusions and invites some further discussions which are instructive for practitioners in the field.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Research on the typical success or typical failure of Intranet, theoretical or practical, is pervasive in the literature. Delone and McLean (1992) have long established that there are many ways to define IS success. Apparently, different definitions would significantly influence the results of the field study. In the Intranet context, the critical antecedent factors are identified in many studies (Tang 2000). Masrek et al. (2006) integrate portal management and top management support in *organizational* dimension; user involvement and user computer efficacy in *individual* dimension; and infrastructure flexibility, IS integration, and IS structure in *technological* dimension to one framework.

In *organization* dimension, portal management is the task dealing with the sustainability of an Intranet. Terplan (2000) advocated that Intranet management is critical to the success of Intranet. In portal management, the management team and the control tools are also important, especially in the context that the subject is huge and diversified in hierarchy and culture. The importance of top management support in the Intranet success, even in all kinds of information systems, needs no introduction. Since Information Systems stood as an independent discipline, or even earlier, many researchers have recognized that top management support is a critical factor in ensuring the development and implementation of information systems (Davis 1974, Davis and Olson 1985). Intranet is one kind of various information systems. In the context of Intranet, many researchers have reported the similar result that top management support is determinant in the Intranet success (Zolla 1998, Tang 2000).

In *individual* dimension, Lin and Shao (2000) indicated that strong future users involvement in the design of IS would lead to successful outcomes. Tang (2000) found that managers regarded user involvement as important criteria for successful Intranet adoption. Meanwhile, most researchers found that user resistance is a negative factor in the development and implementation of many kinds of information systems (Lapointe and Suzanne 2005). Some researchers also have research interest in finding effective ways to rein the user resistance to user involvement (Anne and Alain 2005). In one word, high user involvement is a critical positive factor in the Intranet project. Some research proved that high level of computer self-efficacy contributes to high degree of IT acceptance and usage (Cheung 2001), the same opinion is shared in the context of Intranet research field (Tang 2000). The author believes that high user computer efficacy equals to high personal productivity in knowledge-intensive society. User computer efficacy is a critical factor in the success of Intranet.

In *technological* dimension, IT infrastructure is the foundation of shared IT capability that enable the development of IT applications and the support of business processes (Xia and

King 2004). IT infrastructure flexibility is the organizational capability to support a variety of information technologies and information services (Byrd and Turner 2000). The author believes that the more flexible the IT infrastructure is, the more successful Intranet will be. IS integration is to which extent the IS activities integrate with organizational and functional activities (Ragu-Nathan et al. 2004). Tang (2000) indicated that information systems integration is strongly related to the Intranet success. Despite some special cases in which distributed computing is more applicable, the author insists that usually higher IS integration contribute to the utilization of an Intranet. IS structure refers to how information systems structured or dispersed throughout an organization (Hussin et al. 2005). Researchers part company with each other in terms of the relevance between IS structure and Intranet success (Hussin et al. 2005, Eder and Igarria 2001). According to the project experience for years in Intranet field, the author believes that lesser switch from the extant system structure to the future structure leads to higher probability of Intranet success. The other point is that the switch should be made well under control. The author puts IS structure in the end to indicate that this factor is not as determinative as the factors listed above; still, it is regarded as an important antecedent factor.

However, the result of IBGCRRP implementation disconfirms the existing theories. IBGCRRP finally achieved success even though the evidence of the antecedent factors of IBGCRRP implementation was perceived as absent, or at best very weak. The research objective of this paper locates to explain this inconsistency and to prove the Intranet prosumer is an important yet neglected key factor.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Action research aims to solve current practical problems while expanding scientific knowledge. The action researcher is concerned to create organizational change. The author involved in the IBGCRRP project and significantly influenced the development of the project, and thus the research methodology in this paper is an MIS *action research*. The essence of action research is a simple two-stage process, i.e. *diagnostic* stage and *therapeutic* stage. The diagnostic stage involves a collaborative analysis of the social situation by the researcher and the subjects of the research, while the therapeutic stage involves collaborative change (Baskerville and Myers 2004).

In diagnostic stage, theories are formulated concerning the nature of the research domain. In this stage, the author conducts the research by comparing the antecedent factors of IBGCRRP with those in the conceptual model proposed by Masrek et al. (2006) to explain the reason why the success of IBGCRRP is called an **atypical success**. Through the real experience of action, the author clarifies in details the weak explanation power of the existing theory one by one.

In therapeutic stage, changes are introduced and the effects are studied. This stage consists of two parts in this paper. Firstly, the author explains the concept of the Intranet prosumer and how Intranet prosumer contributed to the atypical success. In this phase, intensive action research method is employed through rich description of the case context and evidence of iterating between data and theory. Secondly, the author attempts to framework the mode of Intranet prosumer participation in the intranet project in general and makes change to the understanding of and implementation it.

4 DIAGNOSTIC STAGE: COMPARISON OF THREE INTRANET SCENARIOS

To have a clear picture in the diagnostic stage of action research in this paper, the following session discusses typical success, typical failure, and atypical success respectively through comparison.

4.1 Typical Success

According to Masrek et al. (2006), seven antecedent factors in three dimensions are critical to Intranet success. A good condition of them contributes to a typical success, as is shown below (Table 1).

Table 1: Typical Intranet Success

Three Dimensions	Antecedent Factors	Typical Success
Organizational	Portal Management	i. Skilled management team, ii. Strong management tools, iii. Philosophy of sustainability
	Top Management Support	Wholly-hearted commitment
Individual	User Involvement	i. High user involvement ii. Low user resistance
	User Computer Efficacy	High personal computer productivity
Technological	Infrastructure Flexibility	High flexibility
	IS Integration	Close relevance between IT activities and business activities
	IS Structure	i. Lesser switch from the extant structure to the future structure ii. Under control

4.2 Typical Failure

Meanwhile, many researchers draw conclusions in case studies on the typical Intranet failure (Tredinnick 2004). When the antecedent factors described in literature are in poor condition, they will most probably lead to a typical Intranet failure, as is shown below (Table 2).

Table 2: Typical Intranet Failure

Three Dimensions	Antecedent Factors	Typical Failure
Organizational	Portal Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Verdant management team, ii. Weak management tools, iii. No idea of sustainability
	Top Management Support	Lack of top management support
Individual	User Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Low user involvement ii. High user resistance
	User Computer Efficacy	Low personal computer productivity
Technological	Infrastructure Flexibility	Low flexibility
	IS Integration	Far relevance between IT activities and business activities
	IS Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. More switch from the extant structure to the future structure ii. Out of control

4.3 Atypical Success

The author refers to **atypical success** of Intranet as Intranet success which derives from a disadvantaged combination of antecedent factors. It was not well discussed in former research. IBGCRRP is exactly an atypical success (Table 3). It appears closer to a typical failure situation.

Table 3: Atypical Success

Three Dimensions	Antecedent Factors	Atypical Success (Situation in IBGCRRP)
Organizational	Portal Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Verdant management team, ii. Weak management tools, iii. Philosophy of sustainability
	Top Management Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Lack of top management support ii. Wholly-hearted commitment from mid-level management
Individual	User Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. High user involvement ii. High user resistance
	User Computer Efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. High personal computer productivity ii. Well-distributed IS background staffs
Technological	Infrastructure Flexibility	Low flexibility
	IS Integration	Far relevance between IT activities and business activities
	IS Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. More switch ii. Under control

4.3.1 Portal Management

In the IBGCRRP, the internal management team of Bayer consists of one department manager from Corporate Communication Department, one executive from Internal Control Department, and several staffs from Information Management Department and Human Resource Department. They are all not experienced in Intranet program, and they come from Bayer (China) Limited, while members from Bayer (Hong Kong) Limited or Bayer (Taiwan) Limited fail to appear in the team. The management tools are limited to basic modules of Lotus Notes and Internal Supervisor. However, to make an integrated, sustainable Intranet for Bayer in Greater China region is a deep philosophy in the heart of every management team member.

4.3.2 Top Management Support

The Board of Bayer in Greater China region appreciates the IBGCRRP, the financial support is sufficient, as is mentioned above, up to 1.4 million US Dollar. However, it is not decent to say the project earned wholly-hearted support from the top management. Most of them were too busy flying between Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, while most of their energy was concentrated on the Integrated Industrial Site construction.

Meanwhile, Head of Corporate Communication Department and Head of Legal Affairs Department, two mid-level managers from Bayer (China) Limited went all out to facilitate the project. The reason is not complex. Intranet well serves to the internal communication, which plays an important role in the function of Corporate Communication Department, and which used to be performed through e-mail and posters. Also, Legal Affairs Department was submerged by questions from staffs inside the group about the company law flow dealing with different related aspects. Well-designed Intranet also provides a quick search of the related law flow by providing updated charts, and thus saves Legal Affairs Department a lot of energy, which could otherwise be well used in some other semi-structured or unstructured problems. These two mid-level managers lobbied every department they could to explain the importance of the Intranet project, launched all the subordination to help facilitate the project, and gathered all the resources they had to build in. With the help of these two mid-level managers, the IBGCRRP strives to achieve success.

4.3.3 User Involvement

It deserves attention that high user involvement coexists with high user resistance during the IBGCRRP. Most staffs from Corporate Communication Department, Legal Affairs Department, Information Management Department and some staffs from Human Resource Department and General Administration Department showed high user involvement in the project. They initiate the information gathering, site map suggestion, and even business process reengineering. Some of them with Information System background even simulated the future system and then gave some decent comments on how to improve the planned Intranet, which is to some extent the prototype trail, conscious or subconscious. During lunch hour or some other occasions, they lobbied their colleagues in other department to better understand the Intranet. The author witnessed that for several times during the project. They did it voluntarily and with high spirit. The author believes that their direct perception of the future benefits by the upcoming Intranet led their behaviours.

Paradoxically, a sharp difference occurred in the most staffs based in Hong Kong, Taiwan, where a primary Intranet was already built and they think they live quite comfortable with the extant systems. These staffs resisted the project by refusing to provide some important information to be used in the Intranet, by denying the value of new Intranet, by asking the author to do self-service for the Intranet, which means the author had to glean the structure and content of new Intranet from the old primary local Intranet.

4.3.4 User Computer Efficacy

The author found the overall user computer efficacy of staffs in Bayer in Greater China region is very high, no matter the staff is in advocate of the Intranet project or indifference to it. Every staff is equipped with a notebook with wireless LAN and almost every one is familiar with the performance of required information technology.

Furthermore, a group of Information Systems background staffs well distributed throughout the subject. With the help of Human Resource staffs in the portal management team by searching the think tank of all the staffs, the author quickly located most of them. Some of them contributed to leverage the overall user involvement, some of them added to the Intranet under tremendous pressures from their colleagues who do not quite understand the value of it. Some of them even provided their expertise to join in the building team voluntarily. It is not an exaggeration to say that without these staffs, the IBGCRRP is doomed to a failure in the end.

4.3.5 IT Infrastructure

The IT infrastructure flexibility is low in Bayer in Greater China region. To say it is low is not to say it is simple, oppositely, it is too complex. The systems in Mainland China are in Simplified Chinese, German, and English, while those in Hong Kong and Taiwan are in Traditional Chinese and English. The organizational abilities to support the change are also varied in three locals.

Staffs in Bayer Business Services know SAP and Lotus Notes very well, while they are quite puzzled in face of the new Intranet. To solve this problem, a novel while small team called Bayer Business Consulting was established to support the improvement of the overall infrastructure flexibility, and finally it turned out to be a wise decision.

4.3.6 IS Integration

In the IBGCRRP, the extant information systems integrated with the business loosely, it is also the reason why the project was launched. Three groups with different status, three locations with different cultures, and seven functional departments with different concerns, all these make the integration a difficult task and a must. Lotus Notes is installed in every notebook. However, staffs with different tasks were using the same interface. The notebooks of company were limited to add new application, neither on demand nor on time.

The author had a through discussion with some heads, and finally decided to use a threefold navigation (group as first-level navigation; location as second-level navigation; functional department as third-level navigation) strategy and on-demand application add/drop tactic in the new Intranet to solve the IS integration problem. The new Intranet integrates with the

main business activities seamlessly and gains appraisal even from those who once strongly resisted the project.

4.3.7 IS Structure

IS structure in Bayer in Greater China region is mainly hybrid, with Lotus server and SAP server centralized in Mainland China, Bayer Workflow server, internet server, and some small local Intranet servers dispersed in three locations.

Much switch is necessary during the project period, the new Intranet server is scheduled to put together with the Lotus server and SAP server to make the whole structure a centralized one in the concern of better management and future maintenance. The switch not only needs fund, but also calls for the understanding of staffs from different locations. According to the former experience, much switch may lead to failure in the end. However, with the help of a vendor from Hong Kong and internal IS professionals, the switch is success and well under control.

5 THERAPEUTIC STAGE PHASE ONE: INTRANET PROSUMER

In therapeutic stage of this action research, the author traced back to the project. With the fact that lack of good portal management and top management full support, low IT infrastructure flexibility and IS integration, high user resistance from some staffs, and a large step from extant IS structure to future one, what in the end made the IBGCRRP an atypical success rather than, according to the conceptual framework in the past literature, a typical failure?

The term “prosumer” was coined and used 145 times by Toffler and Toffler (2006) in their *Revolutionary Wealth*, which refers to those who produce customized products or provide personalized services for self-consumption or volunteer public use in the knowledge society. A prosumer is in fact a “PROducer and conSUMER”. Before that, “producer-consumer model” was theorized by two economists, Stigler and Becker (1977) in improving the rational choice model.

The author attributes the atypical success to **Intranet prosumer**. Here, the author defines “Intranet prosumer” as a professional who is voluntarily contributes information, expertise, or entrepreneurship to planning, development, implementation, or maintenance of Intranet for self-service or public use in a business entity. Intranet prosumer is a combination of “producer” and “consumer” in the Intranet context. In the “producer” scenario, Intranet prosumer voluntarily contributes to all stages of Intranet success; in the “consumer” scenario, Intranet prosumer enjoys the benefits brought by a successful Intranet for free. There are basically three types of Intranet prosumer, manager-level Intranet prosumer, IS professional Intranet prosumer, and non-IS professional Intranet prosumer.

5.1 Three Types of Intranet Prosumer

5.1.1 Manager-level Intranet Prosumer

Manager-level Intranet prosumer usually holds some resources. He/she contributes to Intranet through his or her entrepreneurship, and could to some extent remedy the absence of top

management support. Organizational/Individual dimensions are the most probably areas that manager-level Intranet prosumer takes efforts in.

In the IBGCRRP, the two heads of department are manager-level Intranet prosumers. Their voluntary contributions, such as the lobbying other departments, the determination to get the new Intranet going, and the high spirit of their subordinations raised by these two mid-level managers, obviously went beyond their duties mentioned in job description, which somewhat compensated the absence of the top management support and finally made the IBGCRRP an atypical success.

5.1.2 IS Professional Intranet Prosumer

IS professional Intranet prosumer holds related expertise. He/she contributes to Intranet through all the lifecycle of the Intranet, including the planning, development, implementation, or maintenance. Individual/Technological dimensions are the most probably areas that IS professional Intranet prosumer takes efforts in.

Staffs with IS background distributed throughout the Bayer in Greater China region are IS professional Intranet prosumers. Most of them are in Information Management Department. Some of them are in some other departments; while some of them are in the departments where negative opinions of the Intranet project existed. They themselves show high user involvement in the project. They initiate the information gathering, site map suggestion, and even business process reengineering. Some of them even simulated the future system and then gave some decent comments on how to improve the planned Intranet. They also made full use of informal communication channel to discuss the IS integration alternatives for the new Intranet. Their contribution well bridged the gap between the author and the staffs who once saw no future of the new Intranet. These days, it is said that some staffs voluntarily taught their colleagues about the know-how in using the new Intranet and checked Intranet performance in case of future maintenance use.

5.1.3 Non-IS Professional Intranet Prosumer

Non-IS professional Intranet prosumer holds information from different areas of the entity. He/she contributes to the Intranet through initiating some information gathering and some supporting works. Organizational/Individual/Technological dimensions are all areas that non-IS professional Intranet prosumer takes efforts in.

Those staffs with no IS background but still took active part in the IBGCRRP are also Intranet prosumers. They belong to non-IS professional Intranet prosumers. Staff from Internal Control Department voluntarily provided the idea of management control tool improvement plan, which remedied the weak portal management; staff from Human Resource Department not only did a good job on maintaining the portal management team, but also voluntarily to search the think tank to identify those potential Intranet prosumers in Bayer in Greater China region. Many other staffs from different departments and groups did a lot of anonymous contribution to the final success of the project, including providing the departmental information, facilitating the communication between IS professionals and department colleagues, reporting the information requirement in the new Intranet, advocating technology improvement from non-technology perspective, and etc.

5.2 Intranet Prosumer's Participation in IBGCRRP

The author found that, despite the lack of good portal management and top management full support, despite the low IT infrastructure flexibility and IS integration, and despite a large step from extant IS structure to future one, the presence of a large and well-distributed Intranet prosumers eliminated most obstacles in the project caused by the absence of some antecedent factors in organization, individual, and technology dimension, and finally made the IBGCRRP an atypical success. As is mentioned before, it is not exaggerative that without the participation and contribution of Intranet prosumers, as is shown below (Table 4), the project is doomed to fail in the end.

Table 4: Intranet Prosumer's Participation in IBGCRRP

Three Dimensions	Antecedent Factors	Intranet Prosumer's Participation In IBGCRRP (Type)
Organizational	Portal Management	i. Manager-level ii. Non-IS professional
	Top Management Support	Manager-level
Individual	User Involvement	i. Manager-level ii. IS professional iii. Non-IS professional
	User Computer Efficacy	i. IS professional ii. Non-IS professional
Technological	Infrastructure Flexibility	i. IS professional ii. Non-IS professional
	IS Integration	IS professional
	IS Structure	i. IS professional ii. Non-IS professional

Taking these Intranet prosumer's participation into account, the inconsistency of atypical success in the IBGCRRP is explained and reconciled, while the success is retained. In the following section, the author attempts to establish a conceptual framework for the Intranet prosumer's participation in an Intranet project. Thus, the paper moves towards next phase of therapeutic stage.

6 THERAPEUTIC STAGE PHASE TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTRANET PROSUMER PARTICIPATION

According to the Intranet prosumer participation in the IBGCRRP and years of experience in other Intranet projects, the author proposes a conceptual framework of Intranet success with Intranet prosumer participation in general, as is shown below (Figure 1). In addition to renowned routine cycle of Intranet in the center (real-line frame), Intranet prosumer participation cycle also plays an important role surrounding the routine cycle (dashed-line frame), perceived or not, to the Intranet success.

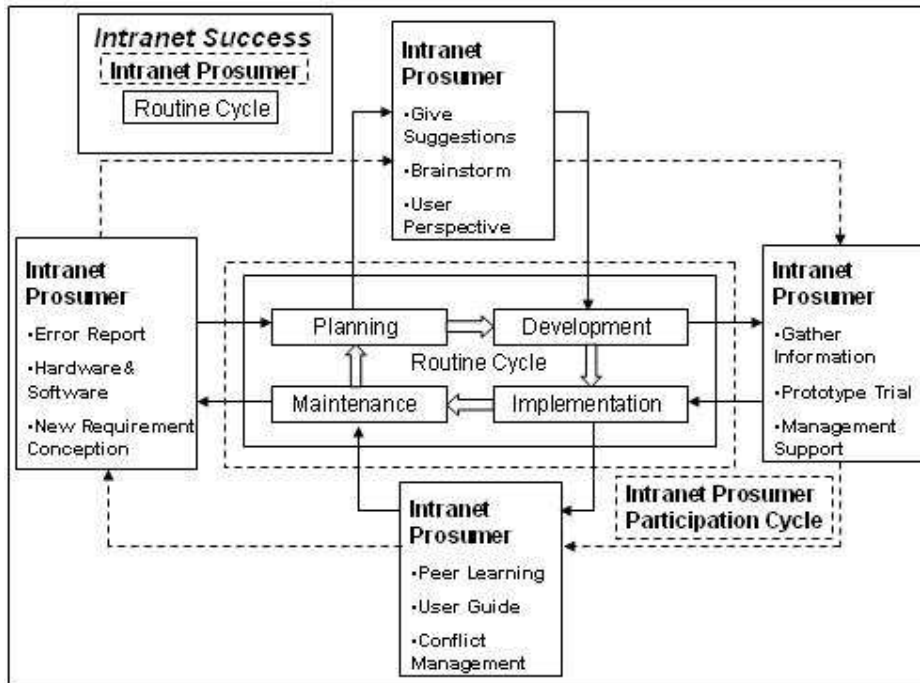


Figure 1: Intranet Success with the Participation of Intranet Prosumer

6.1 Intranet Prosumer Participation Cycle

6.1.1 Planning

In the planning period, Intranet prosumer voluntarily gives suggestion in terms of the future Intranet. They use brainstorming to exchange ideas between each other or with the Intranet conductor about the planning. Their suggestions could be crucial because the suggestions are embedded with and from precious user perspective. They help conductors better understand the system requirement and serve as a bridge between user and planner. With the help of Intranet prosumer, a good beginning is half-done of the new Intranet.

6.1.2 Development

In the development period, Intranet prosumer gathers information from all departments, which is important to the Intranet, because without valuable information, Intranet will be useless. Especially under the circumstance that the Intranet developer is a vendor out of the subject, whether it is the initiative information providing or negative information extracting could make the final performance of the new Intranet a total difference. The other aspect that Intranet prosumer helps in is the prototype trail, through which the developer can get important feedback from future users, and thus improve the quality of the Intranet under process. According to software engineering theory, software development can be facilitated with the presence of management support. Intranet prosumer can take some part in the management support function.

6.1.3 Implementation

During the long period of implementation, Intranet prosumer updates the information frequently to make sure the information on it is valid. Meanwhile, to overcome the unfamiliarity with the new Intranet, peer learning is a very good method initiated by Intranet prosumer. Some IS professional Intranet prosumers also take the responsibility to user guide, and thus saves a lot of training costs. In face of the user resistance, Intranet prosumer voluntarily explains the effect and convenience of the new Intranet, and then lessens the user resistance during the implementation period. In fact, at this point, Intranet prosumer performs conflict management, which is more an art than a science.

In this period, the “consumer” side of Intranet prosumer is obvious. Intranet prosumer enjoys the efficiency and effectiveness of the Intranet he/she once contributed in different ways, directly or indirectly, but all are not compensated in currency form. Intranet prosumer also enjoys self-actualization in witnessing the other Intranet stakeholders are making full of the Intranet.

6.1.4 Maintenance

Maintenance period can be as long as the Intranet exists. Intranet prosumer voluntarily records errors occurred and report it immediately. Some Intranet prosumers also use their expertise to maintain the software and hardware when the IT professional are far away and can not appear immediately. The author witnessed many cases that the tiny Intranet maintenance, on spot and in time, keeps the business away from a huge loss, such as the breakdown of the whole system. In the long maintenance period, Intranet prosumer actively thinks alternatives which may lead to the birth of a new Intranet.

The “consumer” scenario and the “producer” scenario of Intranet prosumer obviously converge in this period. It is determined by the nature of maintenance period. A new Intranet may derive of this period. Intranet prosumer will again voluntarily take part into a prospective cycle, contributing to and enjoying a new success.

6.2 Understanding the Role of Intranet Prosumer

As is shown in the framework, all periods of routine Intranet cycle are participated in by Intranet prosumer. Intranet prosumer produces information needed by Intranet, uses the information to facilitate the internal communication to each other, provides services needed by Intranet, and gets a well-performed Intranet service as return. Intranet and Intranet prosumer coexist in a win-win situation.

To understand the role of Intranet prosumer is somehow to understand the society we live in nowadays. Considering the booming of “Do It Yourselfers” (DIYers) of cars and houses, the self-service backpackers in the tourism, and the software lovers in the computer industry, volunteers in the neighbourhood, and etc., prosumer is pervasive in our knowledge society. Intranet prosumer is just one kind of these combinations of “producers and consumers”, but in the Intranet context. The presence of Intranet prosumer is an objective phenomenon, to which deserved attention was not paid before.

Researchers may neglect the presence of Intranet prosumer, because the voluntary work conducted by Intranet prosumer is not compensated in currency, and often times indirect to

the Intranet project. In fact, Intranet prosumer is a combination of “Intranet producer” and “Intranet consumer”. Intranet prosumer produces while consumes. Intranet prosumer gains through the better service provided by Intranet, and also some physiological satisfaction, such as self-esteem and self-realization. However, the author insists that the role of intranet prosumer is not neglectable in the knowledge society. With the concern of the presence of Intranet prosumer, some problems in the Intranet related research can be solved from an alternative perspective.

7 CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

The author starts from the literature review and mainly the Intranet antecedent factors proposed in conceptual framework by Masrek et al. (2006), and then three scenarios, i.e. typical success, typical failure, and atypical success (the situation in the IBGCRRP) of Intranet are compared according to the framework. The author employs action research method to explain the inconsistency of the atypical success in the IBGCRRP. The author coins the term “Intranet prosumer” and identifies three types of it. Finally, the author proposes the conceptual framework of Intranet prosumer participation in general.

7.1 Conclusions

Through the IBGCRRP, the author finds an inconsistency that project retained atypical success in the condition that some antecedent factors are at best very poor. The author concludes after a prudential analysis that the presence of Intranet prosumer well remedies some deficiencies in Intranet antecedent factors, which is not easily perceived from outside the projects and which is drawn through action research. Intranet prosumer’s voluntary work in the project can to some extent overcome the disadvantage in antecedent factors, and to retain the Intranet success.

It is unwise to give up Intranet project at the very beginning when only observing that the antecedent factors are in poor condition, while without the concern of the effect from potential Intranet prosumer. In the framework proposed, the author insists that Intranet prosumer’s voluntary work spreads all the lifecycle of an Intranet, and thus the Intranet prosumer participation is important to the Intranet success. It deserves attention and further research.

7.2 Discussions

This paper discusses an atypical success of the IBGCRRP qualitatively. The conclusion and conceptual framework proposed is mainly based on the experience of the project and action research. Some issues, such as to what extent can Intranet prosumer’s voluntary work remedy the disadvantage in antecedent factors; does the atypical success of the IBGCRRP happen to be a coincidence; what kind of organization culture helps to create an Intranet prosumer atmosphere; are there any underlying stimuli for Intranet prosumer; and how to guide and make full use of the Intranet prosumer’s voluntary work to achieve project success, still call for further research and discussion.

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