

Dissertation Proposal

Degree Title

BSc Information Management for Business



Written By

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Title:

What are the reasons behind why organisations fail to implement the SAP system successfully?

OR

How does the implementation of a SAP system (ERP System) provide efficiency and standardisation within an organisation?

Why I am interested in pursuing this project and why organisations would be interested in this area of investigation:

I have had a passion for Technology from a very young age and my decisions in the past reflect this well. I chose to gain a certificate in digital applications (CiDA) while studying GCSEs and applied this knowledge at A-Levels, when I opted to carry out the Extended Project Qualification.

After completing my second year at university, I decided to gain a professional qualification during the summer and chose to study the Integration of Business Processes (TERP 10) recommended by my university course leader as he believed that a globally recognised SAP Certification will enhance my skills and be ideal for entering the Technology/SAP field after I graduate. The course is enabling me to gain in-depth knowledge of the world's leading management information system which I am sure will prove useful in the near future.

I believe organisations will find my area of interest in regards to this dissertation interesting because all around the globe, large organisations as well as small, are turning to various forms of advanced technology to assist them in functioning more effectively. The SAP system helps the integration of business processes such as sales, procurement, manufacturing, etc. The opportunity to study SAP enables me to explore its structure and understand how each of the SAP ERP components complement and communicate with each other as a cohesive decision support mechanism, used within multi-national organisations.

The main aim of SAP is to enable the integration of standardisation within organisations, whether they are small or large. This in turn affects the efficiency of a business and how successfully it is being run. I aim to focus specifically on the reasons why this is not possible to achieve when some firms introduce an SAP system and the ways in which this failure can be avoided in the future by firms that are considering to integrate such a system. The reasons and possible solutions outlined in my dissertation may aid organisations significantly when determining which issues to avoid and overcome those that are unavoidable.

The main research questions I need to answer in order to investigate the issue under consideration:

What are the reasons behind why organisations fail to implement the SAP system successfully?

1. What is SAP? What is ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning)?
2. Specify an organisation's requirements when considering to implement SAP
3. Internal issues that exist within SAP itself (problems they are facing currently within themselves)
4. Internal issues/resources leading to failure (such as lack of internal knowledge and skills of SAP)
5. External issues such as cost, quality, time constraints, contractor issues, etc. – and how these lead to other issues
6. Who are the major competitors of SAP? Do they face the same problem? (Why or why not? And how do they resolve or intent to resolve these issues?)
7. Why do such organisations fail to address these issues beforehand?
8. Key solutions to key problems that are usually unaddressed, leading to failure...

How I intend to answer the main research questions:

I acknowledge that this dissertation is based on applied research as it aims to improve the understanding of a particular system as well as address the issues found within an organisation's management system. I hope to find solutions to the problems that commonly arise and my findings will be specifically relevant to and hold significant value to managers in organisations that are considering the implementation of SAP.

I have a tight timescale in which to carry out primary and secondary research in order to help me address the questions outlined above, and enable me to investigate the issue under consideration. I will start off by creating a work plan so that my activities are logged which will help me keep on track and overcome avoidable problems. Factors to consider in the research process are: access to data, timescale and other resources such as finance/equipment, validity and reliability of the data acquired and also, ethical issues which are usually relevant when carrying out primary research. A table outlining the main project risks will be created that tie in with a contingency plan so that delays in meeting deadlines can be avoided when possible.

An organisation which is currently focusing hugely on SAP and that implements SAP into its daily activities is GlaxoSmithKline (GSK). This well-known global pharmaceutical company employs contractors from all over the world to ensure that the integration of SAP does not lead to failure, and tries to avoid the mistakes made by companies who have failed with this integration previously. Having a close relative working at this organisation will allow me to form my primary research by enabling me to work and interact closely with the organisation's seniors working in the SAP department by setting up meetings, in order to study and understand their business processes, as well as gather their essential requirements.