Team Project Phase-I Report

Since the success of this very important component of the class depends heavily on Phase-I, please pay careful attention to the selection and initial investigation of the group project. Consider factors such as the skills and background of your group members, other commitments during the quarter, travel time for participating in the interviews, etc., before taking on the project. Also try to have at least one person in your group who is more technical (for example, knows or likes Visual Basic, ASP, Access, and etc.). Mentioned below are some important points about the activities involved in Phase-I of the project.

1. Selection of Company

Try to select a small organization, whenever possible. For example, think about small businesses run by friends and relatives and whether they might be willing to support your group in the project. Another possibility is to look for projects “in-house,” that is, where you worked or are currently working, or did or are currently doing your internship. You are also encouraged to take an entrepreneurial path in which you develop the system for a start-up.

2. Selection of project

In general, systems that are relatively independent of other systems are easier to develop. To this end, try to determine how tightly your system couples with other systems in the organization or organizational unit. How crucial is the system to the day-to-day operations of the unit? You are unlikely and perhaps ill-advised to take on something that is “mission critical.”

3. Identify Users

Who are the end users? Who manages them? Who has budgetary authority? Is there a project sponsor (a person in a management role who advocates for and supports your project)? Sometimes the presence of a project sponsor may greatly facilitate your request for resources from the firm you are dealing with.

4. Identify Success Factors

Find out the key determinants of success for the unit. These are usually less than half a dozen in number. To elicit Success Factors, think of: a) Industry related factors, b) Firm related factors, c) Factors of current importance, and d) Factors that are government or regulation related. Try to find out the links between your system and the Success Factors. That is, how does your system contribute (or add values) to some or all of these factors?

5. Preliminary Feasibility Analysis

Identify potential benefits and costs. Also, examine other feasibility metrics discussed in class. At this point, the estimates (for benefits or costs) can be rather rough.
6. Scope of the Study

Keep the scope of the study narrow, rather than broad. Students generally find it more satisfying to have accomplished a small project well than to have superficially studied one with a broader scope. To trim down the scope of the project, you MAY consider some of the following:

a) Changing scope of project to be stand-alone, rather than on a network.
b) Dropping peripheral components from the scope of the project
c) Breaking the system down into several connected modules and focussing on one or two modules.

7. Organizational Chart

For very small (for example, one-person companies) organizations, this may not make sense. However, when possible, draw up an organizational chart emphasizing details of the unit or sub-unit you are studying.

8. Evaluation of Project Risk

Use the Risk Evaluation spreadsheet discussed in class to evaluate the risk of the project. Remember, filling the numbers in this form is less important than the thinking that goes into the choice of these numbers. Through discussion with your group members, you should be able to find out what the risks of your project really are and what steps you should take during the quarter to manage these risks.

9. Initial System Request

Summarize your project information in a one-page System Request. Use the template for the System Request form.

Requirements for Phase I

Your Phase-I report should not be more than 5 pages including all tables, graphs, forms etc. The report should mainly cover points 3, 4, 5, 8, and 9 mentioned above. In addition, you should provide a brief description including the name, address and nature of business of the firm you are studying.