AN ERP APPLICATIONS CLASS: HOW TO BEG AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPORVE IT

Mohsen Sharifi, Department of Accounting, College of Business and Economics, California State University Fullerton, Fullerton, CA 92834, 714.278.2230, msharifi@fullerton.edu; Gary B. McCombs, Department of Accounting, College of Business, Eastern Michigan University, 406 Owen Building, Ypsilanti, MI 48197, 734.487.0109, gary.mccombs@emich.edu

ABSTRACT

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems is one of the standard IT skills taught at many schools. The main reason for such a movement has been the brilliance of software firms in promoting such packages through academic institutions. The integration of ERPs into curricula has not been easy for the schools that have chosen to infuse such skills into their classes. In some cases the experience has been painful for schools and students, the main stakeholders. This experience is not too far from the experience of business firms while engaging in implementation of ERPs.

This paper is the reflection on the experiences of one school in this journey and the way a particular ERP package is used to provide this highly desired skill. It also discusses how continuous improvement efforts are used to move the course forward to the next level. The next level is the integration of process improvement into the ERP's course agenda so that students could design or reengineer a typical system before attempting to start any hands on usage of the ERP knowledge. The authors believe that this continuous improvement effort will prove useful regardless of the specific ERP or applications chosen. The experience also may be useful to schools that are in the process of implementing or considering an ERP classroom system.