

Editorial

In my last editorial I identified five factors which make my professional life a bit more difficult than I hoped it would be. The first was intensification of communication.

There is a basic law in innovation that technological change should be accompanied by and, at least, is followed by, organisational change. When technology is changing very fast, as in our profession, the gap between the two processes becomes larger.

Most people in our profession are on the side of pushing technological change, and have to cope with their frustration that their environment is unable to keep up organisationally. If, in such a situation, you want to make progression, you can no longer rely on traditional, hierarchical channels which have imposed changes in the past. You have to go around and convince people that what was good for your job will be good for theirs. Such a mission really intensifies your communication pattern.

Another element is contributing very heavily to this. If you consider the present state of information technology you will recognise that it is a mixture of traditional data processing, information management and telecommunications. In trying to sell such a product to an organisation, you will inevitably cross traditional borders between departments. People in these departments will watch your activities rather critically, so you have to involve them before the start. That means: talk to them and convince them that it is better to do it together. On a voluntary basis, since there is not yet the enforcement from the organisation. And that voluntary basis inevitably means more talking!

Add to that the facts that in many organisations:

- the computer department still has the attitude of 'black-box' data processing;
- the information people are mainly concerned with the collection in the library;
- the telecommunications manager (if there is any!) only thinks about the number of voice lines and telephones.

If you cannot convince your bosses that they need changes in their organisation, that will be your frustratingly talkative life.

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