

Critical Success Factors for the Implementation
of an Enterprise Resource Planning System
in the Western Health Board

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Abstract

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Successful implementation of systems has never been easy. Implementation of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system is a complex, lengthy and costly process. Despite the huge investment, there is extensive evidence that many companies experience considerable problems, particularly during the actual implementation phase. The Western Health Board is currently implementing an ERP system, as part of a programme to introduce ERP systems throughout the Irish Health Service. The name given to this ERP system is PPARS (Personnel, Payroll and Related Systems). Moving to an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system will require significant business process re-engineering. The strategy of not conducting a prior business process re-engineering phase and using PPARS to engineer the processes concurrently to the implementation adds to the complexity and to the project expectations. PPARS like similar public service projects often begin with a dangerous blend of optimism, inexperience, enthusiasm, and uncertainty. The personnel involved often find themselves facing uncertainty and competing agendas, such as the Health Service Reform Programme and the Financial Information Systems Project (FISP). At the same time there may be over-optimistic expectations of likely outcomes, or even the actual demand for the product being provided. Without a proper understanding of the project's challenges and implications at the outset, you may not have the right personnel or financial resources to handle it. Analysis of critical success factors and success criteria among the stakeholder groups in this research is intended to increase stakeholder understanding of the project and the factors contributing to its success

There is a shortfall in existing ERP research in the Health Service. Given the problems experienced primarily in the private sector, this thesis involved an analysis and prioritisation among stakeholders groups of Critical Success Factors (CSFs) and the Criteria for measuring success, for the implementation of an ERP System in the Western Health Board (WHB).

The research method chosen for this research project is of a qualitative nature through an interpretive case study, where data collection techniques have consisted of a thorough literature review, secondary data review of documentation regarding the ERP project (PPARS), focus groups and group interviews.

Twenty two (22) ranked CSFs were identified from the literature review. These factors were drawn primarily from the private sector, and did not have a specific focus on the Health Sector. It was found that the CSFs identified in the literature were applicable to the ERP implementation in the WHB, together with five other CSFs which also applied in the health sector.

It was found that while the prioritisation of success factors and success criteria vary among stakeholder groups, the factor of "clear goals and objectives" was prioritised very high among all of the groups interviewed.



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It is widely accepted that Information Systems (IS), if properly used and managed, can greatly contribute to the improvement of the efficiency and the effectiveness of both public and private sector organisations, especially when they are accompanied by proper processes redesign and reorganisation (Loukis & Tsouma, 2002).

1.1 Introduction

This research project will study the factors that influence an implementation of an enterprise-wide information system in a large organisation. More specifically, it will examine what the critical success factors (CSF) are for implementing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in a Public Health Service environment. This chapter introduces the research objectives, the research methodology and the research questions. The research project that has been undertaken is examined, giving an outline of why such research has been done, placing the research in context and demonstrating its importance. This chapter also explores the Organisation chosen for this research project which involves an introduction to the Irish Health Service but focuses on the actual ERP system that is been implemented into the Irish Health Agencies (IHA's). Finally an overview of the chapters within this dissertation is presented.

1.2 Research Objectives

The primary objective of this thesis is to determine the factors for achieving success and the criteria against which the special project I am currently involved with will be measured by the project Stakeholders. Across the organisation will the success of the project be measured primarily in terms of the deliverables and their effectiveness in meeting service requirements, in terms of benefits realised, or in terms of satisfying the project objectives within the timeframe and within budget?

1.2.1 Theoretical Objectives

The aim of this research is to explore and report on the critical success factors for an ERP implementation in the Irish Health Service. ERP implementation cases and critical



success factors have been studied with a focus on implementations occurring in other industries, but few studies have been conducted involving implementations in a health service environment. This research project will therefore attempt to bridge the gap in the literature (Heiskanen & Newman, 1997) between the ERP implementations and critical success factors for ERP implementations in a public health service environment. Currently, all the Irish Health Boards have or are in the process of implementing PPARS and it is therefore relevant to study how these systems should be introduced and implemented in a diverse, public health service environment. In this way the thesis aims to contribute to the application of theory regarding CSF's to the implementation of ERP systems.

1.2.2 Practical Objectives

This research helps to organise several complex IS phenomena in an appropriate theoretical framework (Benbasat & Zmud, 1999). It also identifies factors that can aid the Irish Health Service in future IT projects that will be conducted, as it is claimed that information technology can come and go, but the information system lessons remain the same (Lee, 2000). Currently a reform programme is planned in the Irish Health Service. In this context Health Boards have become increasingly dependent on technology and thus research that can aid Health Boards to identify the optimal implementation of such systems will have a great potential impact. The introduction of PPARS across Irish Health Agencies (IHA's) is to be followed by Financial Information Systems Project (FISP), which represents another ERP SAP implementation across the IHA's. This research will engage with project stakeholders such that they may contribute to this research and thereby expanding their understanding of the project.

1.3 Definitions

For the purpose of this thesis success factors are defined as:

The specific activities undertaken that will satisfy the project success criteria.

And success criteria are defined as:

The measures used to determine project success.



1.4 Research Questions

The Research Questions of this thesis are broken down as follows:

1. What are the CSF's and the Success Criteria for a SAP ERP Integrated Human Resource System in the Irish Health Service?
2. How are the CSF's and criteria ranked among the most influential and most interested stakeholders?
3. What influence do these CSF's have on achieving the project objectives?
4. Can the identification of CSF's assist in identifying activities to incorporate in the planning process (i.e. to the schedule as activities) to facilitate controlling for these critical success factors?
5. Are CSF's for an ERP implementation in the Irish Health Services different from ERP implementations in other sectors?

In so doing this thesis will demonstrate the use of the Theoretical Framework developed in identifying the CSF's and analyse the relevance of critical success factors in the Project Planning Phase for the implementation of an Integrated Human Resources/Payroll System within the Western Health Board. Managing IS projects during organisational changes poses new challenges for IS project managers. Project managers need to understand that uncertainty created by organisational change can influence a project. Awareness of its impact is crucial for successful IS project management (Winklhofer, 2002).

1.5 Research Methodology

The research method chosen for this research project is of a qualitative nature through an interpretive case study (Galliers 1992; Klein and Myers 1999), where data collection techniques have consisted of a thorough literature review, secondary data review of documentation regarding the ERP project (PPARS), observations, focus groups and group interviews.

1.6 General Project Description

Many researchers and industry experts rate the theme 'ERP implementation failure' to be one of the major topics regarding ERP systems (Davenport, 1998) and the implementation of such systems. ERP system research is regarded as a well-justified



research area, as it is found to have conceptual links with more or less every major area of information system (IS) research (Markus & Tanis, 1999). ERP systems can be seen as a representation of the entire software industry (Sprott, 2000), therefore it is seen that the proposed research into an ERP system implementation in a large organisation, such as a Health Agency, is very appealing. Investigation into large software packages (which an ERP system is) has been called for in the IS literature (Gable 1998), pointing out that since ERP systems are so frequently used there ought to be a greater push for research into issues relating to the use and implementation of such systems. Success factors in information systems implementation projects have been hard to define (Hirschheim & Lyytinen, 1987), even though a number of studies in this field have been presented (Nelson & Somers, 2001; DeLone & McLean, 1992; Bowtell et al., 1999). The Western Health Board is selected in order to investigate the critical success factors for implementing an ERP system. The WHB is an interesting selection as it presents opportunity to meet with the different users of the system, the project implementation team that is going to implement the system, and management. The ERP system that will be investigated is the Systems, Applications, and Products (SAP) ERP system, where the WHB decided in 2000 to implement the Human Resource/Payroll project termed Personnel Payroll and Related Systems (PPARS), on a phased basis. The WHB has subsequently decided to implement the Finance modules of SAP termed Financial Information Systems Project (FISP). This initiative is in line with the National agenda to implement PPARS and FISP within all Irish Health Agencies. Both of these projects PPARS and FISP represent ERP implementations.

One issue raised with ERP implementation projects is the fact that the system attempts to streamline the organisation processes by introducing business best practices (BBP) through business process reengineering (BPR) activities (Koch, 2001). There have been reports that the actual ERP system does not work with the organisation that it is intended for (Hunter et al., 2000). Considering these expensive large and time consuming projects that have dominated the IT industry since the late 1990s, there should be sufficient research into how to implement such systems effectively. This research should also include a focus on the Public Service environment and more specifically, to also include an Irish Health Service focus. However, no current research is addressing critical success factors for implementing an ERP system in the Irish Health Service environment and thus the research questions examined in this thesis are of significant importance.



1.7 The Projects Organisational Context

This section provides details about the Western Health Board and PPARS. A strong emphasis has been placed on the evolution of the Western Health Board, Organisational Reform currently planned, selection of an ERP system within the Irish Health Service, project stakeholders and the organisational context that impacts on the implementation of the system.

1.7.1 History of the Health Boards

The Department of Health was established in 1947, under the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) Act, 1946. Prior to 1947, the public health services were the responsibility of the Department of Local Government and Public Health, and continued to be administered by local authorities until 1970. The Health Act, 1970 established eight Health Boards and increased the Department's direct involvement in the execution of health policy. The end result of deliberations resulted in the following eight Health Boards being established:

Table 1 - Established Health Boards

TITLE OF THE BOARD	FUNCTIONAL AREA	AREA (SQ. MILES)	NO. OF MEMBERS
Eastern Health Board	Dublin, Kildare & Wicklow	1,800	35
Midland Health Board	Laois, Longford, Offaly & Westmeath	2,250	30
Mid-Western Health Board	Clare, Limerick & Tipperary (North Riding)	3,040	28
North Eastern Health Board	Cavan, Louth, Meath & Monaghan	1,950	30
North Western Health Board	Donegal, Leitrim & Sligo	2,600	27
South Eastern Health Board	Carlow, Kilkenny, Tipperary (South Riding), Waterford & Wexford	6,630	31
Southern Health Board	Cork & Kerry	4,700	33
Western Health Board	Galway, Mayo & Roscommon	5,020	31

The passing of the Health (Eastern Regional Health Authority) Act, 1999 effectively dissolved the Eastern Health Board and replaced it with the Eastern Regional Health Authority (ERHA) and three new Health Boards namely, South West Area Health Board, Northern Area Health Board and East Coast Area Health Board. The ERHA is responsible for planning, arranging, overseeing and coordinating health and personal social services for 1.5m people who live in Dublin, Kildare and Wicklow.



The Department of Health and Children (DoH&C) has overall responsibility for the development of health policy and for the planning of health services. The Health Boards established under the Health Act 1970, are the statutory bodies responsible for the provision of health and personal social services in their functional areas. They are also the main providers of health care at regional level.

1.7.2 Western Health Board – Background Information

The Western Health Board was established under the Health Act, 1970 and took over responsibility for health services with effect from 1st April, 1971. The Board embraces counties Galway, Mayo and Roscommon and extends over 5,330 square miles. It had a population of approximately 311,000 in 1971 and this figure has now grown to almost 350,000 - almost half of who are under the age of 30 years.

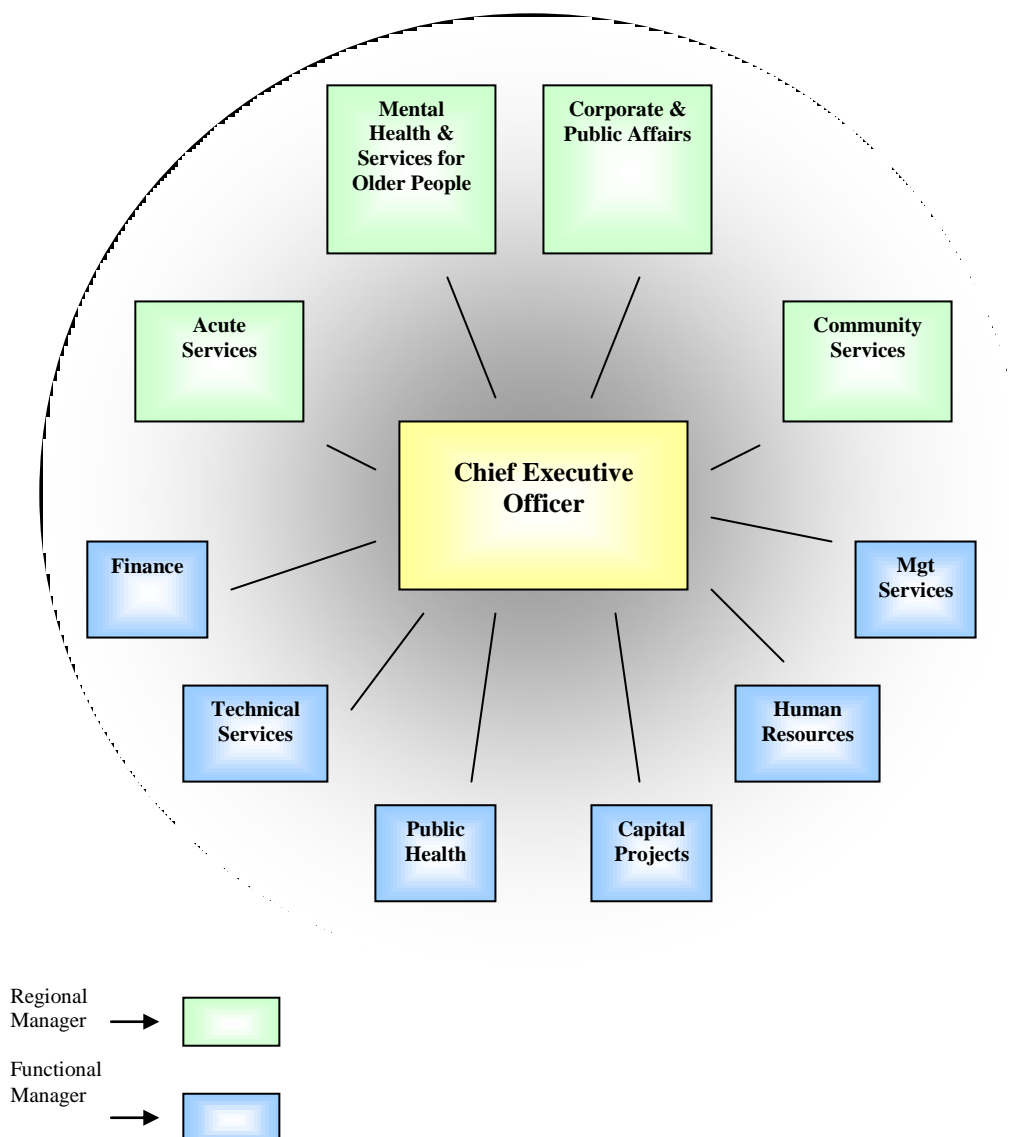
Figure 1 - Map of Western Health Board Region



The WHB employs approximately 13,000 staff with a whole time equivalent of approximately 9,700 between the counties of Galway, Mayo and Roscommon and stakeholders range from numerous different work environments such as medical, nursing, allied health professionals, support services, maintenance and administration. The WHB provides health services in the areas of Acute Services, Community Services,

and Mental Health & Services for Older People, Corporate & Public Affairs and Public Health. These services are supported by the functions of Finance, Technical Services, Capital Projects, Human Resources, and Management Services

Figure 2 - Western Health Board Management Team



1.8 Organisational Reform

The structure of the health services in Ireland has remained unchanged for over thirty years. In 2001, the Irish Government launched its national health strategy Quality and Fairness, A Health System for You. The Strategy set out key objectives for the health

system for the following 7-10 years. These objectives were centred on four national goals:

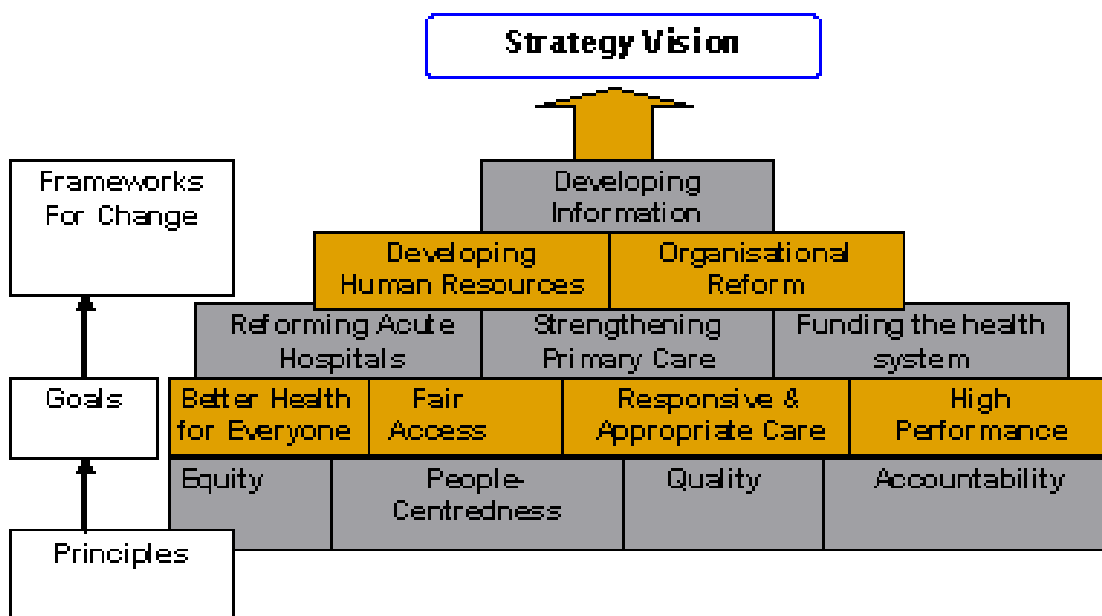
- Better Health for Everyone
- Fair Access
- Appropriate Care in the Appropriate Setting
- High Performance

In addition, the Strategy identified the need for a whole range of system changes to occur in order for these goals to be achieved. These Frameworks for Change were:

- Primary Care
- Acute Hospital Services
- Funding
- Human Resources
- Organisational Change
- Information

In June, 2003 the Government announced the Health Service Reform Programme initiating an unprecedented change programme for the Irish Health System.

Figure 3 - Organisational Reform



The Programme emerged from the recommendations contained in two reports:

- **Report of the Commission on Financial Management and Control Systems in the Health Service** - The Brennan Report (DoH&C, 2003b).
- **The Audit of Structures and Functions in the Health System** - The Prospectus Report (DoH&C, 2003a).

Key Elements of the Reform Programme

In June, 2003 the Government made key decisions relating to the reform of the Health Service. The key elements of the Programme included:

- A major rationalisation of existing health service agencies to reduce fragmentation. This includes the abolition of the existing health board/authority structures.
- The reorganisation of the Department of Health and Children, to ensure improved policy development and oversight.
- The establishment of a Health Services Executive which will be the first ever body charged with managing the health service as a single national entity. The executive to be organised on the basis of 3 core divisions:
 - National Hospitals Office
 - Primary, Community and Continuing Care Directorate.
 - National Shared Services Centre
- The modernisation of supporting processes (Service Planning; Management Reporting etc.) so that they will be in line with recognised international best practice.

1.8.1 Purpose of Reform Programme

The Reform Programme announced in June is aimed at ensuring that the Health System is organised and managed in a way which will help it achieve the four national goals of the Health Strategy. The Programme sets out a range of structural, organisational, financial management and systems reform.

1.9 Overview of the PPARS Project

The implementation of a new Human Resources Information System (HRIS) in the health boards across Ireland was a national initiative set up by the Department of Health and Children (DoH&C). The reason behind this initiative was the fact that the department wanted to streamline the information that it was receiving from these



different agencies i.e. reports and statistics. The DoH&C had a vision of introducing one common system for all of the Health Agencies. The Chief Executive Officers (CEO's) of the Health Agencies recognised that there was no standard Human Resources (HR) system in health agencies and that those systems in place were largely manual and undeveloped. The business solution to be funded by the Dept. of Health and Children would be an Integrated HR/Payroll system called PPARS (Personnel, Payroll, and Related Systems), that would replace legacy payroll and HR systems (see Appendix 2 for PPARS scope and functionality). The National PPARS project was set up in 1999 for the purpose of implementing a new integrated Human Resources system for the Irish Health Services. PPARS was developed to meet these visions of the Department of Health & Children and the Health Boards using Information and Communications Technology (ICT) to support the provision and development of Human Resource Management (HRM). The project is a joint initiative between the Health Boards and a number of Voluntary Hospitals, and was brought in under the work programme of – The Health Board Executive (HeBE). The Health Boards Executive as established in February, 2002 to enable the health boards, the Eastern Regional Health Authority and non statutory provider agencies to work together on an agenda to develop and modernise the health delivery system. The Board of HeBE comprises of the Chief Executive Officers of the seven health boards, three area health boards and the Eastern Regional Health Authority. A HeBE project is defined as any activity undertaken by two or more health boards with the agreement of all members of the Executive.

The software product selected was the SAP (Systems Applications and Products) HR Management System. Founded in 1972, SAP is a recognised leader in providing collaborative business solutions for all types of industries and for every major market. Headquartered in Walldorf, Germany, SAP is the world's largest inter-enterprise software company, and the world's third-largest independent software supplier. SAP employs over 28,900 people in more than 50 countries.

1.9.1 The PPARS Project – Business need Dept. Health & Children

In 2003, the Government as outlined above adopted the recommendations of the two main reports (Dept. of Health & Children, 2003a, 2003b) driving structural reform in the Health Service. Both reports champion the need for quality information systems and highlight the negative consequences of inadequate investment in such systems in the past.



A central tenet of the reform proposals is the establishment of a National Shared Services Centre (NSSC), which will co-ordinate data currently gathered and processed in Health Board Headquarters. Typically, HR and Finance data is intrinsic to this. PPARS is the obvious source for this information going forward.

Prospectus found there is a need for a single HR function to co-ordinate and lead system wide activities and that shared service must be developed. It placed a high priority on a robust information gathering and analysis capability and on the national management of resources to integrate service delivery. The benefits offered by PPARS conform to this model and address these priorities, since it provides a National Integrated HR platform, and a unified database of health resources. The Brennan Report (DoH&C, 2003) included in its terms of reference the need to enhance the capability of the Health Services regarding:

- Management Accounting
- Costing
- Associated Information Systems

In a section calling for greater investment in IT, it further argues that PPARS should be extended to “all major spending agencies”. Of its seven IT recommendations, three explicitly focus on the centrality of PPARS in a reformed Health Service, a further three include PPARS implicitly, while the remaining recommendation relates to Patient Information Systems.

In summary, a Cabinet decision was taken endorsing the findings and recommendations of the Brennan and Prospectus reports (Dept. of Health & Children, 2003a, 2003b). These reports devote key parts of their findings and recommendations to the positive role that PPARS has to play in the Health Service of the future.

1.9.2 Product Description

The National PPARS project implementation team chose to have a phased ERP implementation (Brown & Vessey, 2000), both in terms of the functionality offered by the system with different modules being introduced during the different phases, and in terms of the introduction of agencies into the Project, as is a common approach found in most ERP implementations worldwide.



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