Investment in Excellence

Amanda Jenkins reports on the Investment in Excellence program.

Investment in Excellence (IIE) is a program which has been run for several years in ITG, where participants have reported that it has been a worthwhile experience. Jill Ross, R&IT Communications, regularly facilitates IIE in ITG and suggested that the program could be of real benefit to TRL. Together with Jill, I initiated discussion on the possibility of running IIE in TRL with Noel Teede, then Acting Director, HR and the Transition Team. Noel gave the go ahead to run a pilot of the program here at TRL to see whether it might be useful for TRL staff. The pilot is funded by David Carter, R&IT HR.

IIE is designed to assist participants: to understand themselves better, to learn tools to assist them to reconsider habits and attitudes, become more personally powerful in home and worklife, develop more effective communication skills and ways of relating to other people, and to realise potential.

Other themes are developing teamwork, leadership, improved personal motivation and accountability.

Topics include:
⇒ your belief system
⇒ how our minds work
⇒ the success model
⇒ affirmations
⇒ self esteem
⇒ creating and sustaining momentum
⇒ making change an adventure
⇒ goal setting
⇒ empowering self and others

The Program is broken into two phases: Phase 1 is for three days duration; one day per week for three weeks. Then there's a break of about four weeks in which participants are encouraged to utilise audio tapes designed to build on the work done in Phase 1.

Phase 2 is two days duration; one day per week for two weeks (with follow-up audio tapes).

The format is video based with on-site facilitators to organise exercises and activities based on the concepts discussed in the videos and relevant to your situation.

The IIE pilot is being conducted on site. Facilitators for the pilot are Jill Ross and Mitzi Wotton, R&IT Comms.

In order to effectively pilot IIE in TRL it is important to get a good cross section of staff, levels etc. To get this cross section Doug Kuhn, Barbara Armstrong and myself put our heads together to think of people that might be interested in taking part in the pilot of IIE and who would form a representative group.

We were keen to get participants:
- who will get something out of it personally ;
- who can assist in evaluating the pilot (in the sense of having the knowledge, experience of TRL to say, 'this program or this particular session/format won't work in TRL' etc.);
- who may be interested to receive further training and join a pool of on-site facilitators of the program (this of course depends on whether the evaluation recommends it continues to be run at TRL);
- people who are willing to share their experiences with their peers. (If the program is continued, we will rely on word of mouth to encourage participants.)

18 people are participating in the pilot:

David Giddy	Peter Hormann	Ernie Gibbs
Linda Barnes	Richard Thornton	
Margaret Turner	Vivienne Gale	Ross Garner
Jim Thompson	Ken Parker	Greg Lampard
Carol Wilson	Dave Bakewell	Steve Iskra
Barbara Armstrong	Janet Lindner	Lyn Moore

(Unfortunately Ronnie Flanagan and Amico Carratelli who were going to take part, had to pull out at the last minute.)

The third day of phase one takes place this week. I am enjoying IIE and already see applications for it in my home and worklife. Next issue of FIFO we will have the response of other participants to IIE.

The FIFO Newsletter

FIFO is a fortnightly newsletter for all TRL staff. It is produced by the Promotion & Communication section at TRL. We welcome your feedback and contributions.

The editorial team consists of Tanya Waterson-Clark, Science Writer (03) 9253 6704 and Amanda Jenkins, Employee Action Coordinator (03) 9253 6741. Our offices are on 1/M8.

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Telstra

BISTEL. What is it?

What is it ?

BISTEL stands for **B**usiness **I**ntegration **S**ystem for **TEL**stra. It is basically a very big software package intended to solve many of Telstra's data collection processing and reporting problems. It must also be viewed as a tool to drive home changes in the way Telstra views and manages its business into the future. More detailed information about BISTEL follows which can be read at leisure, however, BISTEL will offer a single, common system that integrates functionality currently provided by 27 existing systems. It is intended that it be released in three stages although a revision of the BISTEL strategy will see Releases 2 and 3 occurring concurrently.

Release 1 will be implemented in the last quarter of 1995 in Victoria. The major impact for TRL is in the replacement of the current PURCHASE order system affecting predominantly the General Admin. staff. Their staff have already commenced training courses designed to educate them in how to use the new system.

Releases 2 & 3 will cover full Financials (Profit & Loss/Balance Sheet) and Project Planning mainly directed towards ECPLAN (Engineering Construction Plan). The main system impact in TRL will be felt in the FACS (Finance, Assets & Computing Services) Branch where an entirely new financials package is to be implemented involving training etc., with full implementation in July 1997.

In addition to the formal training, there will be a range of Computer Aided learning available to staff.

Do you need to care ?

Do you need to order material/services ?
Do you manage budgets ?
Do you manage a Unit or Project ?
Are you accountable for the performance of a unit or group or project ?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions, you need to care because BISTEL and the philosophies which are incorporated in the basic design will affect the way in which we manage.

But relax just a little, because other than in the Finance, General Admin. and Business Planning areas, there is no immediate impact. There

> *... BISTEL will offer a single, common system that integrates functionality currently provided by 27 existing systems ...*

will be an ongoing effort to get ourselves into a state of readiness for 1 July 1997 involving a range of "paving the way" type exercises such as activity based costing (which is a mapping/review exercise to structure Business Unit financials to facilitate BISTEL implementation and change business planning practices).

It sounds complicated, and it is, but we will have help. In the meantime keep interested in BISTEL and keep reading whatever you can about it. We will be in touch as developments occur.

BISTEL (More information)

BISTEL is an integrated software package that will provide reliable, low-cost financial and materials management processes and systems to produce the accurate and consistent information necessary for us to maintain our position as the leading customer oriented telecommunications carrier in Australia, and to expand our presence on the global scene.

What's The Problem?

Put simply, over the years we've accumulated too many stand-alone materials, financial and other business systems that are very hard to support and maintain, making it difficult for us to quickly adapt to changing market and regulatory demands.

This seriously impacts on our ability to remain competitive, as key information required to drive our business has at times become disjointed and difficult to find. While our systems have continued to proliferate, our business has tended towards integration. We needed a better systems approach.

The bottom line is that we have to integrate and streamline our materials and financial management processes and data to enable us to deliver outstanding customer service.

BISTEL is the solution

After extensive studies in a number of Business Units, it was decided to implement BISTEL. The software is supplied by international software vendor SAP Germany, and was chosen because of its excellent track record in similar applications worldwide.

BISTEL. What is it? (Continued)

What's in it for us?

BISTEL contains materials and financial business management tools which will be accessible across the whole organisation, and offers a "one stop shop" for all provisioning of materials and services. Implementation of the system will provide:

✓ our people with skills that will enable them to operate essential business management functions;

✓ reliable and responsive tools that support and improve our financial and materials processes;

✓ timely, relevant and reliable data capture and processing for management planning, monitoring and business control;

✓ integrated processes and systems that deliver a standard Telstra approach and meet essential Business Unit needs in line with our strategic directions.

What benefits will BISTEL provide?

The BISTEL system is comprehensive, and its major benefits include:

& a single, common system that integrates functionality currently provided by 27 existing systems;

& better utilisation of resources, with a focus on value adding activities, resulting from an Activity Based Costing (ABC) approach;

& a vehicle for comprehensive adoption of Activity Based Management approaches;

& data integration - financials and materials are drawn together using common codes, linked in a real-time manner, and the need for reconciliations between systems is virtually eliminated;

& establishment and support for planning, budgeting and performance monitoring through to individual business initiatives;

& provision of consistent information at all levels without interference from timing differences or data integrity problems.

For further information about BISTEL please contact Kevin Sexton on (03) 9253 6510 or Mike Chirgwin on (03) 9253 6508. We will keep all staff informed on future BISTEL developments.

Technology - where to from here?

On Tuesday 4 July, WIN is holding a forum on "Technology - where to from here?", and the key speakers will be:

Dr Noel Teede, GM Business Development, Telstra Research Laboratories

Debby King, GM Centre for Leadership, Telstra Learning

Where and when?

Theatrette
1st Floor, 242 Exhibition Street
Melbourne

4 July 1995, 12 noon - 2 p.m.

Women in Networks (WIN) is an information sharing forum set up within NTG to raise and identify issues affecting women, with the objective of increasing their participation in the decision making process to add value to Telstra's business.

Come along! All welcome (including men). Quite a few TRLers will be going - so if you want to share a taxi, contact Carol Wilson.

For further information about this presentation or about WIN, please contact Carol Wilson on (03) 9253 6274 or Nicole Davis on (03) 9253 6437.

Have your say

If you have a question or an issue you'd like to raise, send it in to FIFO.

Pam McNamara has sent in this piece.

Recently I was asked to put together a list of the last 5 years of TRL external publications on Photonics. I tried - only to find that it couldn't be done.

It seems that there *is* a database in the NIRC but gaining access to it is difficult and when found the information is incomplete, not up-to-date -and lists only the author's names and titles of papers - and no dates of publication.

Asking people (Branch Admin., Section Heads, et al.) who should know something about it, I gained the impression that everyone thought that "someone else" was looking after it. Allan Mitchell, Section Head of Promotion & Communication, told me that responsibility for updating the information had been passed to the Branches some years ago . . . but the Branches don't seem to know that.

Eventually I satisfied my "customer" for the Photonics publications by typing out a short list of 30-40 papers copied from Research Quarterlies with a note to say that this was a selection from a total of about 600.

The point is that I should not have had to do that. Telstra is not employing me as a typist. I should have been able to access a readily available database, extract the required information and transmit it in whatever form was needed. It was embarrassing to be unable to do so. WHAT SORT OF RESEARCH LAB. ARE WE?

Apart from satisfying outside requests it would be useful - especially when "Programs" become the mode of working - for TRL research staff to be able to obtain information about work carried out at TRL. As it is we spend all this money Telstra management are always complaining about and then effectively LOSE the results! Not exactly efficient. Papers written by TRL staff are known only to their authors and their Section Heads (maybe) and possibly to a few of their closest colleagues (maybe). What a waste.

Pam

What do you think of FIFO?

The Editorial Team of FIFO would like to get some feedback on what you think of the FIFO newsletter.

What do you think of the name?
What do you think of the articles?
What do you think of the layout?
Is it easy to read and understand?
Is it relevant?

Please send any comments by e-mail to Amanda Jenkins and Tanya Waterson-Clark. Thanks!

Contributions for Research Quarterly April, May, June '95

Tanya Waterson-Clark has written this piece about Research Quarterly.

At the end of each quarter, someone from the Promotion and Communication Section at TRL begins to pull together the next issue of Research Quarterly (RQ). In recent times, this has been my job.

One puzzling factor in working on RQ is that the end of a quarter for some people seems to be a complete surprise (although the quarters of the year do occur with monotonous regularity).

The second quarter of 1995 is all but over. In a few days BAMs will be asked to gather together the contributions for the next Research Quarterly.

All contributions should be with me by 21 July 1995 - this time no exceptions will be made!

For further information about Research Quarterly, or any other publication from the Promotion and Communication section, please contact Tanya Waterson-Clark on (03) 9253 6704.