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Chapter Two: Minicase #1

An IT manager requests an amount of funds to upgrade the e-mail server. Without the necessary upgrade, the server will be burdened by the sheer amount of e-mail and will run the risk of crashing. The business manager denies the request, citing the past reliability of the server and expresses concern at the recent large IT expenditures. The business manager leaves the conversation wondering what IT investments are really necessary, and if the IT manager is just creating "job security." The IT manager, likewise, leaves the meeting frustrated at not having the tools he/she needs to do the job properly. The IT manager knows that when the server crashes it will be his/her responsibility to fix.

a. Do you think this happens often in business?

Absolutely. Resources like time, money, equipment, and personnel are all limited within any organization, and different members of an organization are all competing for these resources to accomplish their specific tasks. Here we have an IT manager, focused on maintaining healthy IS for the company, and a business manager, focused on overall company well-being and profits, who knows that putting money into one department will ultimately short-change another.

b. What perspectives do you think each are taking on the problem?

These are two stakeholders whose perspectives are limited to their own area of expertise. The business manager is the owner of the system, and is primarily concerned with whether that system is serving the business need, which includes doing so at minimal cost. The IT manager is serving as the designer, recognizing a trend in system usage, and attempting to acquire new technologies to preemptively avert system outages.

c. How could each have communicated those perspectives and business needs better?

The IT manager should not have brought the issue up to the business manager without presenting metrics about system response times, user loads, and projected estimates of these metrics as provided

by a DSS. The business manager should not have responded dismissively, but rather should have requested the metrics needed to perform a cost-benefit analysis.