

It's the Culture, Stupid! Up in the Clouds with Technology

John Swinton, Janine Walker
Griffith University

Janine Walker is the Director of the Office of Human Resource Management, Griffith University Adjunct Professor in the Griffith University Business School.

Janine has held significant senior positions including HR Director of Princess Alexandra Hospital, Director of Industrial Relations for Queensland Health and Industrial Director and General Secretary of the Queensland Public Sector Union. Janine has worked as a broadcaster and columnist, served for six years on the Board of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and was Chair of the Corporations Audit Committee for four years. She has held a range of Government appointments including membership of the Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission and Chair of the Australia New Zealand Foundation. She has been Chair and a member of a number of Commonwealth and State Ministerial Working Parties in areas as diverse as the status of vocational education and training, and employment issues affecting people living with HIV-AIDS.

Janine is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management.

John Swinton is the Associate Director (Organisation Development) Office of Human Resource Management, Griffith University.

Johns portfolio includes staff support and development; leadership and management development; health and safety; and supporting major organisational change agendas.

He has held various management positions at Griffith University, including: Manager, Leadership Development Programs; Change Manager, New Age Business Services (People Soft Implementation); HR Consultant (Administration); and Manager, Staff Development. John has extensive experience in staff development and career counselling roles in higher education at Griffith, at the University of Melbourne, at Monash University and through an overseas secondment/ exchange with University College, Cardiff, UK. He has also worked for private and welfare organisations. John was a past Association for Tertiary Education Management (ATEM) Chairperson for the SE Queensland and Northern Rivers NSW region

Increasingly over recent years (and with no sign of slowing), large organisations, including universities, have been **moving to the Cloud**. Understandably – many of the products, or **solutions** as we like to call them (not sure to which problems, though!) offer efficiencies, effectiveness, streamlining, and, not always least, viable alternatives to often cumbersome costly enterprise system applications.

For the last few years, the Office of Human Resource Management at Griffith University has been implementing a number of cloud-based systems, moving a number of work processes online - in recruitment, induction and orientation, health and safety, and performance review – these only some of the total university implementations (for example, others in the finance and research areas).

One particular initiative which would be of interest to conference participants is the piloting of a performance review/management system **ItsGenie** with a number of universities, mainly in the UK but also in Canada and including Griffith and Murdoch Universities in Australia.

This UK product has been used successfully in the private sector for a number of years. The current pilot is aimed at gaining an understanding of how the system can be modified/improved to exactly meet the requirement of the higher education system.

Based on our experience, this presentation will provide an overall reflection on recent and current implementations of online systems and how the Office of Human Resource Management is adapting its approach with **ItsGenie**. It will not address technical aspects in the main but focus more on the impacts on organisational culture against a broader framework on change management.

The presentation will cover a number of aspects including

- push-back from clients;
- particularly those infrequent users of systems;
- the effect of implementing multiple systems at the same time;
- perceptions of work-shifting from centralised administrative functions to academic units; and
- the effect of 'implementation teething issues' on confidence in the systems.

A clear danger here is reaching some sort of **tipping point** where benefits are not realised. This is particularly the case where implementing a new system, such as **ItsGenie**, is only one part of an overall change strategy, in this case moving the organisation to a high performance culture.

More specifically, the danger is that, as a result of system resistance/abandonment, change to the new intended culture can be compromised, perhaps not even realised

In his 1994 book, **The Age of Paradox** (Harvard Business School) Charles Handy recalls a story of the **Road to Davy's Bar**-....." if you pass Davy's Bar, you've gone too far !!", and from it draws the conclusion that:

".....by the time you know where you ought to go, it's too late to go there, or, more dramatically, if you keep on going the way you are, you will miss the road to the future."